Factors Influencing Parents Choice of Catholic Schools in the Western Cape, South Africa

By

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PLAGARISM DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and has not been previously submitted in whole or in part for the award of any degree, nor will be at any other institution. I further declare that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed by candidate
Signature Removed

Date: 28/06/05

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ABSTRACT

This study is about parental choice of Catholic schools in Western Cape, South Africa. It seeks to identify and understand what contributes to parents' choice of Catholic schools. Parental choice of schools for their children has become a global topical issue. However, no research has been conducted in South Africa concerning the reasons why parents choose Catholic schools for their children. The main reasons why parents choosing Catholic schools for their children in Western Cape and indeed South Africa are not well understood. Therefore a survey was conducted involving 612 parents in five Catholic secondary schools, using questionnaires as the main instrument of data collection and draw conclusions about the factors, which motivate parents to have their children educated in Catholic schools.

The following are the key findings of the study; parents tended to based their choice of Catholic schools on academic values which include high academic standards, good examination results and teacher quality. In addition, they attached importance to values such as individual and communal respect.

The findings of this study provide a practical feedback to Catholic education policy makers to act upon. It also serves as a contribution to Catholic education in Western Cape as well as a basis for further research.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about parental choice of Catholic schools in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. According to Potter and Hayden (2004), parental choice of schools for their children has become a topical issue worldwide. Studies have been undertaken in a number of nations to investigate the many factors at work in influencing such choice. However, little research has been conducted in the Western Cape or South Africa concerning the reasons why parents choose Catholic schools for their children. The precise reasons why parents choose Catholic schools in the Western Cape and indeed South Africa are not well understood. Some of the choices may be haphazard, but other parents will be making informed decisions.

In this introductory chapter the researcher will present the aim and significance of the study, and the method used in this study. In addition, the researcher will briefly introduce Catholic schools in South Africa, and present the research questions. The chapter will also present the overview of the study.

1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to identify and understand what contributes to parents' choice of Catholic secondary schools in Western Cape Province.

1.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will offer some useful and practical feedback which the Catholic education policy-makers can act upon. This feedback will also help the policy-makers stay well informed as to what their schools stand for. The study may also help other educational bodies to better understand what parents need. Finally, the research will serve as a contribution to Catholic education in Cape Town and in South Africa as a whole. In addition it will serve as a contribution to and as a basis for future research on the topic in Cape Town.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODS

Questionnaires will be used as the main research instrument in this study, to explore and draw conclusions about the factors which motivate school choice in the Catholic secondary schools in the Western Cape Province.

1.4 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The first Catholic school in South Africa was established by Missionary Sisters in Grahamstown in 1848 and by 1953 the Catholic Church ran 688 state aided schools and 130 private schools, with 11361 students (Brian and Denis, 1999). The Nationalist government viewed the Catholic Church as foreign. "It was, in some respect, an English-speaking church and therefore, antithetical to the interests of the Afrikaner people. Moreover, the Church was seen to be developing the minds of the black people by educating them in English-speaking mission schools, and this was a significant threat to Afrikaner cultural and economic domination of the country" (Brian and Denis, 1999: 190). During the time of apartheid, the Catholic Church decided to keep schools open, in contrast to other churches who opted to close theirs when there was no subsidy coming from the then government. The reason for keeping the schools open was to provide "an education which apart from its Catholic ethos would defy the grinding future that Bantu Education had decided for black people" (p.194). It should also be noted that the Catholic Church was the first to admit non-white students in their schools in 1976.

Today the Catholic Church has 343 schools in South Africa (Catholic Institute of Education (CIE) National Schools Office, 2003). Of the 343 schools 103 of them are secondary schools, including combined and co-educational schools. The remaining 240 schools are primary schools, special needs schools and night schools for Adult education. These schools are distributed in all the nine provinces in South Africa. Of the 103 secondary schools, 55 of them are found in urban areas, while 48 are located in rural areas. The total number of learners in these schools (primary and secondary) is 160780, and 90% of this number is black (CIE National Schools Office, 2003).

This study is a survey of the Catholic secondary schools in Western Cape Province.
The Western Cape Province has 5 1 Catholic schools. The Province is made up of the Catholic Archdiocese of Cape Town and the Diocese of Oudtshoorn. Of the 51 Catholic schools 44 of them are found in the Archdiocese of Cape Town. The 44 schools include 34 primary schools, 6 secondary (including 2 co-educational and 3 combined schools), 3 special needs schools and a night school for adult education. The Catholic diocese of Oudtshoorn has only 7 primary schools (Catholic Directory, 2002). There is no secondary school in this diocese. This study drew the sample from the secondary schools in Cape Town Archdiocese. Unfortunately the sixth school declined to participate in this study. The study therefore focuses on 5 schools instead of all 6 Catholic secondary schools in Cape Town.

The reason for focusing on secondary schools instead of primary schools was that in general, secondary school choice is more important than primary school choice because the consequences for learners with respect to examination performance are higher. Secondary school performance largely "decides" tertiary education and career opportunities. It is likely then that the reason for secondary school choice will be different from the reason for primary school choice and possibly more varied. Importantly however, the limited number of High School provides a research possibility that does not require sampling. Thus the results may be considered more reliable than if sampling was required.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the light of issues raised in this Chapter, parental choice of Catholic schools can be explored through a number of research questions. They are as follows:

a. What influences parents' decisions to choose Catholic schools for their children?
b. What do Catholic school parents expect schools to provide?
c. What are the characteristics of parents making school choice?
d. What conclusions and implications can be drawn from the research?

This study will attempt to answer these questions.

The questions posed above serve as a guideline in this study. Literature on parental choice will be reviewed in order to identify the factors influencing parents' decisions.

1.6 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Chapter 2

In Chapter Two I discuss the contextual background to Catholic education and describe the five sampled schools. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the overview of the character and nature of Catholic education. The second section describes the five sampled schools. The purpose of the two sections is to present how the character and nature of Catholic education contributes to the understanding of parental choice of schools.

1.6.2 Chapter 3

Chapter Three deals with the literature review on parental choice. The literature is viewed with particular reference to what other researchers (Potter and Hayden, 2004 and Flynn, 1993) say influences school choice. The chapter is also divided into two sections. In section one six theoretical frameworks to parental choice in general are discussed while section two discusses, five factors influencing parental choice of Catholic schools in particular. These factors are subsets of the theories. They are being discussed separately because literature on parental choice of Catholic schools presents them separately. The theories and factors will be tested in the methodology.

1.6.3 Chapter 4

Chapter Four discusses the research design and methodology used for this study.

1.6.4 Chapter 5

Chapter Five deals with the analysis of the research findings. It attempts to bring together all the research findings into a cohesive explanation of what motives parents to choose Catholic schools for their children in the Western Cape.

1.6.5 Chapter 6

The last chapter draws conclusions and implications from the analysis as to what factors influence parental choice. The chapter also makes some recommendations for the Catholic Education policy makers and for future researchers.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of the Catholic Church, Catholic Christianity has demonstrated a profound commitment to education. The Vatican II's Declaration on Christian Education (1965) sees education as a vital part of the life of every human being. For the Catholic Church, "education is an expression of God's work of salvation" (Groome, 1998: 46). For this reason the Church assumes the responsibility as an educator. This is expressed in the Vatican II document 'Declaration on Christian education' when it states, "the office of educating belongs by a unique title to the Church, not merely because she deserves recognition as a human society capable of educating, but most of all because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men..." (1965: 642).

Since education is part of the Church's evangelical mission, the Catholic Church continues to sponsor a huge network of schools everywhere in the world, staffed by lay teachers and "religious orders of men and women, some of whom were founded precisely to educate" (Groome, 1998: 46). Catholic schools and universities continued to spread, with the intention of providing a liberal education. The Church views a 'humanity-focused' education as a "work of salvation" (p. 46).

In this chapter, I describe the selected schools for this study with the aim of providing an insight into the nature of Catholic schools. The purpose of this is to present an overview of how the character and nature of Catholic education contributes to the understanding of parental choice of schools.

2.2 THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Education has been described as "a crucial catalyst" in influencing the souls of learners and "shaping their inner most being, their identity and agency" (Groome, 1998: 37).

What this implies is that education should aim at developing the whole person. Flynn and Mok (2000) agree with this when they say that "the primary aim of schools is to promote the full personal development of students" (p. 13). Flynn (1993) claims that Catholic schools are committed to the transformation of the whole person. He says the mission of transforming the whole person "embraces the physical, intellectual, vocational, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and religious dimensions of the young person" (p. 20).

The Vatican II documents on "Catholic Schools" and on "Lay Catholics in schools" (in Feheney, 1998) emphasise this holistic education which these schools offer. (see also Canon Law article 795 in Feheney, 1998.) The late Pope John Paul II in his address to the English Bishops (in Flynn, 1993) endorses the idea of the development of the whole person. The Pope stated that the Catholic school is a witness to the truth. He held that genuine education seeks to do more than merely impart knowledge or train people to do an economically productive task. He stated, "all education worthy of the name seeks to bring forth as it were a full person, a person in whom moral excellence is no less developed than are theoretical or productive abilities" (p. 7). Holistic education seems to be the fundamental principle of Catholic education and for this reason it will be assessed via my questionnaire (see Chapter 4).

According to Grace (in Feheney, 1998), the surface-level characteristics of a Catholic school that attract parents might include "success in public examinations, an attractive uniform, success in sporting and other extra-curricula activities, the behaviour of students in public, the public relations image and the nature of building" (p. 6). According to him however, the things that give a Catholic school its character are less obvious. They include: "ethos, philosophy and mission statement of the school, approach to discipline, staff development, nature of leadership, relationships between members of staff, religious education programme and pastoral care programme" (ibid). Grace holds that these inner characteristics ultimately determine the nature of a Catholic school (ibid). The issues which Grace raises will be included in my questionnaire and analysis.

Flynn (1993) argues that the most distinctive feature of effective Catholic schools is their culture which gives them a special character. Flynn maintains that Catholic schools are "places where people find meaning through relationships which are nourished by the curriculum and life of the schools" (p. 7). For Flynn, the culture of a Catholic school includes the "core beliefs, values, traditions, symbols and patterns of behaviour which provide meaning to the school community and which help to shape the lives of students, teachers and parents" (p. 8). Flynn points out that the core beliefs and values of the school community represent what the school stands for. "These include the nature of persons, the role of education, the place of faith in Jesus Christ, the Church's mission in education and Catholic traditions and values such as the Eucharist" (ibid).

Flynn maintains that the symbols (uniforms, ceremonies, religious images) are visible expressions of what the school is about. They help build sentiment of belonging to the school. According to Flynn the core beliefs and values of the school, in combination with its traditions and symbols have given birth to distinctive patterns and meaning and behaviour amongst the stakeholders of the school. These patterns of behaviour are "the rituals or way of life of the school" (p. 8).

Another characteristic feature of Catholic schools is their sense of community. According to Flynn, Catholic schools "nurture a sense of community and belonging in students and teachers as well as parents" (p. 87). Bryle and Driscoll (in Flynn, 1993) also have confirmed that "good schools encourage a sense of community and that this has a pervasive effect on the achievement of students and teachers" (p. 87; see also the Declaration of Christian Education in McLanhan, 2000: 25).

Giving the importance of community, Bryle et al. (in McLachlan 2000) state that "schools which are organised as communities exhibit a set of common understandings among members of the organisation" (p. 25). These include tenets about the purpose of the school, about what students should learn, about how teachers and students should behave, and most importantly- about the kind of people students are and are capable of becoming. Such educational concerns in turn reflect more fundamental beliefs about the

nature of the individual and society. For a school to operate as a community, its members must "share a commitment to the community..." (McLachlan 2000: 25).

The community aspect of Catholic schools has been taken into account in my questionnaire and will be discussed (see Chapter Three).

Catholic education also emphasises the role of teachers. Groome (1998) refers to a Catholic educator's profession as a vocation, his own particular way of living the great virtue of faith, hope and love. In addition, Groome sees a teacher as a "special instrument of God's grace in learners' lives" (p. 443). The Vatican II document on "Declaration on Christian Education" (1965) maintains that Catholic school teachers should perform their services as partners of the parents in order to help young people develop all their gifts and abilities, especially their capacity for freedom and responsibility. According to Groome (998), "Catholicity recommends breaking down hierarchy between teachers and students, between educators and learners, and realising that we are all learners together" (p. 416). This implies that there should be mutual respect and a cordial relationship between teachers and students in the Catholic school community.

The late Pope John Paul II understood that the educational capacity of every scholastic depends on the quality, competence and dedication of its teachers (ibid). He sees teachers' work as participation in "a special way in the mission of Christ entrusted to his disciples" (in Grace, 2000:11). Catholic school teachers have also been challenged to provide learners with tools to become life-long learners and serve the "common good".

Another element of Catholic schools is the mission of 'good service'. In his keynote address to Catholic educators in Johannesburg on the theme Catholic school and the common good in 2000, Grace (in Bodenstein *et al.*, 2000) praised the Catholic schools for serving the common good. According to Grace, "the Catholic education is a common good for all, and to realise the common good mission, the Catholic education depends ultimately on a sense of special vocation among its school principals, head teachers and teachers" (2000: 11). In Grace's view, without a strong conception of vocation among teachers in Catholic schools the mission of common good service in education is likely to

be affected by "the influence of contemporary commercial and market ideologies in education and to secular emphases upon academic and skill productivity alone" (p. 12).

The principles of Catholic social teaching in education consider Catholic school community to be an irreplaceable source of service to both its pupils and the society at large (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in Grace, 2000). The Catholic school on the threshold of the Third Millennium (in Grace 2000) also stresses that Catholic schools fulfil a service of public usefulness and "although clearly and decidedly confirmed in the perspective of the Catholic faith, is not reserved for Catholics only but is open to all those who appreciate and share its educational project" (p. 11). According to Grace, Catholic schools have always encouraged and promoted civil progress and human development without discrimination of any kind (ibid). The South African Bishops' Pastoral plan refers to Catholic schools as community serving humanity (in Bodenstein *et al.*, 2000). This is evident in Pakistan where there are about 500 Catholic schools to serve the Muslim community (Groome, 1998). Grace points out that the position of the Catholic education is that, "intelligence, talents and skills should be developed in Catholic education to the highest possible degree, together with a religious and moral understanding that such personal empowerment is to be used for the benefit of others and the society as a whole" (2000).

From the discussion of the background of Catholic education, it can be inferred that the specific mission and character of Catholic schools derives from their commitment to the promotion of the full personal development of students. This mission embraces the physical, intellectual, vocational, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and religious dimensions of students. The holistic education which Catholic schools offer tends to be the fundamental principle of Catholic education. In addition, Catholic education tends to attribute great importance to community values. The sense of community and belonging which is nurtured in students, teachers and parents appears to be an important component of the culture of Catholic schools. Again Catholic schools claim to be a community serving 'humanity' and not just Catholics. Furthermore, there is a great emphasis on the role of teachers in Catholic schools. Teachers are seen as special instruments of 'God's

grace' in the lives of learners. Teachers should be able to help young people develop their capacity for freedom and responsibility. These educational qualities and values which Catholic education possesses can be seen as a motivating factor in school choice. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Having discussed the nature and character of Catholic education/schools, I will now describe the selected Catholic schools in this study.

2.3 CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SELECTED SCHOOLS

This section describes the five high schools. In each of the schools, the following have been taken into account: location of the schools, school size, culture of the schools, and academic results. In order to maintain anonymity, these schools will be simply named Schools 1- 5. There are six Catholic secondary schools in the Western Cape Province. As is discussed in Chapter 4 (methodology), only five of these consented to take part in the survey. The schools are discussed below.

2.3.1 School 1

School 1 is situated in Rondebosch, a suburb of Cape Town. Rondebosch is a white dominated area and the inhabitants of this area are middle class citizens. 75.8% of parents are from professional and managerial occupations (see Table 5.3.1: Occupation by School). The school is co-educational and combined (primary and secondary). The total student population of the school is 528, with a high school population of 266, and a junior school population of 262. There are 22 high school teaching staff and 24 junior school teaching staff members. The school was founded by a religious congregation of teaching Brothers. The school was originally situated in central Cape Town in 1869 and moved to its present campus in 1918. It evolved from a white, boys-only senior school to a multicultural, fully co-educational institution extending from playschool to Grade 12 in 1977.

School 1 is divided into four units. Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, Middle school and High school. The phases correlate with developmental stages and Montessori classes

are offered from Pre-school level to Grade 6. School 1 is multicultural and international. The school admits every child irrespective of religious or cultural background, including refugee children.

Although the fees of this school are high, bursaries are offered to some children of working-class parents. The yearly fees are paid according to Grades. Montessori 1 - 2 pay R6, 600; Montessori 3 – 6 pay R 11, 300; Grades 1 – 3 pay R13, 150; Grades 4 – 6 pay R14, 900, while Grade 7 pays R16, 550. Then Grades 8 – 9 pay R17, 950 and Grades 10 – 12 pay R19, 500. There is a discount for siblings; the second to fourth child is given a 5% discount (School 1 fee structure, 2004).

The school has a 'Special needs' class to serve the disadvantaged children. In addition, the school offers adult education classes on Saturdays. The school also uses its facilities to serve the local community. The school hall is sometimes used for weddings and meetings. When the head was asked through an e-mail if he could explain why the school welcomes different kinds of people, he replied by saying:

> Our attitude is that we are enriched by diversity. ... Their prime objective of the Adult Education initiative is to empower adults who are illiterate and are wanting to gain literacy and other skills. A large portion of the learners who attend the classes are refugees. Another throng of their outreach is to teach teachers from informal settlements pre-school Montessori teaching methods, so that children from these parts do not start with a deprived educational background.
>
> The Special Needs classes were opened in 2001 in response to a plea from parents of learners who were either too old to attend Junior school Special Needs classes and/or did not want to attend institutions for children with special learning needs. They wanted their children to be in as "normal" an environment as possible: that is to attend a mainstream school, wear a school uniform and be as much a part of normal school activities as possible. The classes have been a great success from both the perspective of the inclusion of learners and their parents, as well as from the mainstream learners who have learned to recognise that each of us is gifted in different ways
> (The School Principal).

It is interesting to note that, even though it is a Catholic school, the pupils are only 35% Catholic. Table 2.1 below shows the distribution of different Christian denominations and religions in School 1. The number of Catholics in the secondary school alone is not known.

Table 2.1: School 1 Religious affiliation

	Students		Teaching Staff	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Catholic	185	35.0	18	39.1
Other Christian faith	202	38.3	19	41.3
Other faith	59	11.2	1	2.2
Unknown	82	15.5	8	17.4
TOTAL	**528**	**100**	**46**	**100**

(Source: the School Principal)

For extramural activities, the school offers a wide range of sporting facilities from soccer and netball to cricket, swimming and squash. The cultural activities include choir, debating societies as well as private group tuition in ballet, drama, judo and karate. The school offers a rich music curriculum and private lessons in a variety of different instruments. In addition, the school organises adventure courses and leadership training, and "on the more serious side, help with issues like conflict resolution" (School leaflet, 2004). Furthermore, the school is involved in an outreach programme. The students are encouraged to help the needy.

The religious nature of the school is evident in the sense that the first thing one sees from the entrance of the gate is an attractive chapel. The chapel is the central focus of the life of the school and all the students irrespective of their religion go to the chapel every morning for prayers. The school holds various Masses on first Fridays, feast days and beginning and end of each term, and Communion service on every Friday. It also displays numerous symbolic images throughout the school, including statues and a crucifix in every room. The school is described as Christ-centered. The spirituality of the school is strengthened through religious education lessons, retreats, confessions and religious

celebrations. In addition, the school prepares candidates to receive First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

The students who are not Catholics participate fully in all the religious activities of the school. The teachers who are not Catholics also do the same. The staff meets every morning for prayers before lessons begin. To help the non-Catholic teachers to acquire the Catholic school ethos and the spirit of the founders of the school, one of the Brothers organises a workshop for them every year. In addition, the teachers also attend Catholic education workshop organised by the Cape Town Archdiocese. When the head was asked to show his preference among two people who apply for a teaching post, he indicated that ideally he would prefer a Catholic but would always choose the person who can do the job.

Academically the school is not performing badly, although it could improve results. The recent Matric results show the school's academic strength. Table 2.2 below provides the detailed Matric results from 2001 to 2004.

Table 2.2: School 1 Matric results from 2001 to 2004

Year	No. of candidates	Pass	Pass with merit	Pass with distinction	Matriculation exemption	% passed with exemption
2001	30	28	8	4	18	60.0
2002	32	32	13	3	22	68.8
2003	29	28	13	5	21	72.4
2004	44	43	14	2	29	65.9

(Source: the Western Cape Education Department)

As Table 2.2 shows, there was an improvement in the school's Matric results from 2001 to 2003. The percentage of students with exemptions began to increase from 60% in 2001 to 72.41% in 2003. But the percentage of those with exemption in 2004 dropped from 72.41% to 65. 90% (see Table 2.2: Matric results from 2001 to 2004). School 1's academic performance should be higher when we consider the small class size. In the

high school, the teacher-student ratio is 1:12, while in the junior school the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:11.

2.3.2 School 2

School 2 is situated in Parklands, a middle-class suburb of Cape Town. 74.5% of parents are from professional and managerial occupations (see Table 5.3.1: Occupation by School). The school was originally situated at Green Point, and founded in 1934 by Religious Brothers from Ireland.

In 2003 however, it was moved to its present site. It is co-educational and runs from Pre-school to Grade 10. The total student population of this school is 423. The high school has a population of 175 students, while the junior school has 248. There are 10 teachers at the high school and 13 at the junior school. This suggests that the teacher-pupil ratio in the high school is 1:18, while in the junior school teacher-pupil ratio is 1:19.

The fee structure is moderate for a middle-class but high for a working-class parent. The fees are charged according to the Grades. Grades 1- 7 students pay R 13,000, while Grades 8-10 students pay R 15,600 (School 2 fee structure, 2005).

According to the principal of School 2, 95% of the school's population is white, mainly due to the school's location. The remaining 5% comprises black and coloured children. Though the school is open to children of every Christian denomination and religious background, it only has children from Christian denominations. Table 2.3 below shows the number of Christian denominations and percentage of Catholic children in the school.

Table 2.3: School 2 Religious affiliation

	Students		**Teaching Staff**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Catholic	157	37.1	14	60.9
Other Christian faith	266	62.9	9	39.1
TOTAL	**423**	**100**	**23**	**100**

(Source: the School Principal)

Though it is a Catholic school, the pupils are only 37.11% Catholic. The school offers a comprehensive extramural programme and learners are encouraged to choose one or more of the numerous extramural activities. The sports activities available at the school include: athletics, soccer, netball, hockey, tennis, swimming and rugby. Cultural activities include: school choir, drama club, chess, art and computers. There is also an outreach programme, known as the Edmund Rice Society (ERS), which reaches out to the poor and needy. The society was established at the school to help children learn about service. 'Specialist extramural' activities include: ballet/ modern dance, karate, golf, Bible club and a speaker- circle (Public Speaking).

The religious dimension of the school is evident, as religious symbols are scattered throughout the school, including a crucifix and a statue of Mary in every room. Apart from these symbolic images, the school has Mass twice a month and class Masses every week. There is also a prayer every morning organised by a Religious Brother on the staff. The principal leads the prayer once a week. The school also organises a retreat for the learners once a term. The two religious education coordinators plan the ERS and retreat every Friday. Another interesting aspect of the religious dimension is that the school organises class confession for the learners once in a month, and prepares interested learners to receive first Holy Communion and Confirmation. Religious Education lessons take place twice a week.

All the staff members, both Catholics and non-Catholics, meet every morning for prayers. The non-Catholic staff takes part in all the religious exercise in the school. The religious education coordinators run workshops for the teachers on Catholic school ethos. When the principal was asked to indicate his choice between two candidates who apply for a teaching post; a Catholic and non-Catholic, he responded by saying that "all depends on the type of person, his/her qualification and the needs of the school". But he added that if there is not much difference between the two candidates, he would choose the Catholic. He said that as a Catholic they would better understand the ethos and principles of Catholic education.

Matric results are used in this study as an indicator to measure the schools' academic strength. Since School 2 is only up to Grade 10, no Matric results are available. However School 2 is generally recognised as a first class school.

2.3.3 School 3

School 3 is a well-established girls' school with a very interesting history. This school is located in Wynberg, a suburb of Cape Town and was established by Religious Sisters from Ireland in 1871. 87.1% of parents are from professional and managerial occupations (see Table 5.3.1: Occupation by School). The school runs from pre-school to Matric level. School 3 is situated in a middle class area. According to the principal, School 3 was the first Independent school in South Africa to open to all races (1976). It continues to welcome all girls irrespective of race and religion and teaches respect and tolerance for others' beliefs. In fact, the school had a Muslim head-girl. This shows that, as a Catholic school, it is there to serve humanity (Groome, 1998). The principal is concerned that the majority of the students are white. It is the wish of the principal to have a balanced demography where children of all colours and cultures are present.

The total student population of School 3 is 911. The population of the high school students is 412, and the junior school has the population of 499. The teaching staff population of the high school is 39, while the junior school has 36 teachers. This suggests that the teacher-pupil ratio in the high school is 1:11, while teacher-pupil ratio in the junior school is 1:14.

The school fees charged at this school are the highest in the sample. Like the two previous schools, the fees of School 3 are paid according to Grades. The pre-school pays R12, 060, Grade 1 pays R14, 200, and Grade 2 pays R15, 140, and Grade 3 pays R16, 080. Then Grade 4 also pays R16, 880, Grade 5 pays R17, 540, Grade 6 pays R18, 300 and Grade 7 pays R19, 100. The fee structure is arranged in such a way that the higher one goes, the higher one pays. The Grade 8 pupils pay R20, 480, Grade 9 pays R21, 240, Grade 10 pays R21, 880 and Grade 11 pays R22, 580 and Grade 12 pays R31, 040 (School 3 fee structure, 2005).

Table 2.4 below shows the distribution of different Christian denominations and other religious backgrounds in the school. Of all the sampled schools, School 3 has the highest percentage of Catholic children (47.7%).

Table 2.4: School 3 Religious affiliation

	Students		Teaching Staff	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Catholic	435	47.7	27	36.0
Other Christian faith	450	49.4	47	62.7
Other faith	13	1.4	1	1.3
Unknown	13	1.4	-	-
TOTAL	**911**	**100**	**75**	**100**

(Source: the School Principal)

The school offers a number of extramural activities. The students are encouraged to develop their talents in sports, clubs and extra curricula activities. The school has impressive art and dance facilities. In the junior school girls are able to join a host of enriching clubs, among them Arts and Crafts, the computer club, the Hiking club, and the Out and About Club (Sr. Rosemary, 1996). In the senior school girls can join the Natural History club, the Classical Society, the Cultural Society, the Debating Society, the Dominican Youth Group and Interact (Sr. Rosemary, 1996). They also have the opportunity of hearing speakers on a whole range of topics, which fosters community awareness. The school also engages in an outreach programme, and gives generously to those in need.

The religious nature of the school is expressed through numerous symbolic images; there are shrines and crucifixes in every office and in every classroom. The religious dimension of the school is also expressed through daily prayers. The school begins the day with prayer and ends with prayer. It also organises Para liturgy from time to time and has assemblies twice a week, beginning with a prayer. According to the principal, the junior school attends Mass every Friday, while the senior school has Mass twice a term. The

reason she gives for this is that the senior school's timetable is full and that there is little time for further service. Each class also has a retreat day once a year. The school has a beautiful chapel, which is attached to the Sisters Convent. There is also a prayer room for anyone who wishes to go there for quiet prayer.

The school also prepares students for the Sacraments. According to the principal, the school prepares students who wish to receive First Communion and Confirmation. Religious education is also part and parcel of the school's curriculum.

The school has 36% Catholic teachers; which helps maintain a Catholic ethos and principles in the school. For non-Catholic teachers the school organises workshops on Catholic ethos once a year. There is also a staff development day, which has spiritual content. All the teachers take part in all the religious and spiritual exercises of the school. According to the principal, she prefers Catholic teachers however she would always go for the best and most qualified teacher irrespective of his or her religious background.

School 3 has been an academic school and was one of the first to offer matriculation examinations. Keeping to date with current trends, the school offers a wide range of subjects relevant to the needs of today. Its recent Matric results have been excellent, continuing the school's proud tradition of academic excellence. Table 2.5 below provides detailed Matric results of School 3 from 2001 to 2004.

Table 2.5: School 3 Matric results from 2001 to 2004

Year	No. of candidates	Pass	Pass with merit	Pass with distinction	Matriculation exemption	% passed with exemption
2001	69	67	41	21	64	92.8
2002	70	70	44	25	66	94.3
2003	67	66	34	26	66	98.5
2004	78	78	40	30	77	98.7

(Source: the Western Cape Education Department)

From Table 2.5 above it is obvious that School 3 is indeed an impressive academic school. The number of matric exemptions is very high; which may explain why admissions to this school have become competitive.

2.3.4 School 4

School 4 is located in Elsies River, a suburb of Cape Town. The inhabitants of this town are mostly coloured, working-class citizens. 28.8% of parents are from professional and managerial occupations (see Table 5.3.1: Occupation by School). The same Religious Sisters who founded School 3 also founded this school in 1954. School 4 is a girls' secondary school running from Grade 8 to Matric level. The student population of this school is 412. The school has 14 teachers. This indicates that teacher-pupil ratio is 1:30. The average class size is therefore larger than the rest of the sample.

The school fees charged at School 4 are also the lowest of all the selected schools for this study. Unlike the three previous schools, the fees are not paid according to Grades. It is the same for all Grades. Each student pays R 300 per year. Though the fees are low compared to all the selected schools, according to the principal, many of the parents cannot afford them.

The majority of the students are coloured and working class, although the school welcomes girls from all backgrounds. The school also admits children from any religious background. Table 2.6 below shows the different denominations and religions in the school.

Table 2.6: School 4 Religious affiliation

	Students		**Teaching Staff**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Catholic	79	18.9	6	42.9
Other Christian faith	328	78.3	6	42.9
Other faith	12	2.9	2	14.3
TOTAL	**419**	**100**	**14**	**100**

(Source: the School Principal)

School 4 has the least of percentage of Catholics. Out of 419 students only 19% of them are Catholics.

Among the schools visited, School 4 is the most poorly equipped school in terms of infrastructure and facilities. The school does not have any grounds for sports, however it does have soccer, hockey and netball teams. All practices for these sports take place off the school grounds at municipal fields. The school has a library, but it is poorly stocked. The school does have a good computer laboratory however, which is well used by the learners.

The religious dimension of the school is manifested through symbolic images and holy statues can be found all over the grounds, and a crucifix in every classroom. Another way in which the religious dimension of the school is expressed is through the celebration of Mass which the students attend once a month. The school also has morning prayers everyday and Angelus at 12 noon. In addition, the school says a prayer before and after each break. There is also a retreat organised for all grades once a year. Religious education lessons are part of the curriculum.

Though not all the teachers are Catholics, they all take part in the religious exercises of the school. The school also organises retreats for teachers once a year. According to the principal, every staff meeting begins and ends with prayer. The principal praises the dedication and commitment of his staff. According to him, even teachers who are not Catholics encourage students to do their best to lead by the Catholic principles of the school. When the principal was asked about whom he would employ in the situation where two people apply for a teaching post, a Catholic and non Catholic, his response was that he would take the one who could do the work. He concluded that he would employ a Catholic if he or she is qualified and ready to make sacrifices for the school.

Academically the school is not doing well. Table 2.7 below shows the Matric results of the school from 2001 to 2004

Table 2.7: School 4 Matric results from 2001 to 2004

Year	No. of candidates	Pass	Pass with merit	Pass with distinction	Matriculation exemption	% passed with exemption
2001	61	59	5	-	7	11.5
2002	40	39		-	5	12.5
2003	34	33	5	-	5	14.7
2004	27	23	1	-	3	11.1

Source: the Western Cape Education Department)

The number of exemptions is not encouraging, but is probably a result of the socio-economic situation of the school.

2.3.5 School 5

School 5 is an all girls' school located in Maitland, a lower middle to working-class suburb of Cape Town. 52.43% of parents are from professional and managerial occupations (see Table 5.3.1: Occupation by School). The school was established in 1912 by a group of Religious Sisters different from those who founded Schools 3 and 4. These Sisters originated from Switzerland. Maitland is mostly inhabited by black and coloured people. The student population of School 5 is 284, with 15 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:19. School 5 is a very impressive school with beautiful buildings. The grounds are small however, with limited space. The principal of this school is a Religious Sister who is praised by parents for her leadership qualities.

The school is open to all girls irrespective of race, colour, culture and religion. However, it has very few white students. Its students are 50% black, 48% coloured and 2% white. The school fee for the year is R 6000 per student, and it is the same for all Grades. The fees are low compared to Schools 1, 2 and 3 but higher than those charged at School 4.

Table 2.8 below shows the different Christian denominations and other religions in the school.

Table 2.8: School 5 Religious affiliation

	Students		Teaching Staff	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Catholic	98	34.5	6	40.0
Other Christian faith	184	64.8	9	60.0
Other faith	2	0.7	-	-
TOTAL	**284**	**100**	**15**	**100**

(Source: the School Principal)

Like others, School 5 has a limited number of Catholic children (34.5%).

The school offers the following sports: swimming, tennis, volleyball, netball, and hockey and ladies soccer. The school also has the following cultural activities: school choir, arts and crafts, drama club, debating club, chess, scripture union, guitar and the environmental club. There is also an outreach programme serving the poor. All learners must participate in the extra-mural programme. Non-participation without a letter from the parents will be punished with community service or detention (School Diary, 2005).

Unlike the rest of the schools, the religious dimension of the school is not immediately apparent from the grounds. However, the religious nature of the school isevident on close inspection. There are some symbolic images, such as statues of Mary,

Jesus, holy pictures and a crucifix in every room. Besides these symbolic images, the school also expresses its religious nature with other forms of devotion. The school attends Mass at least once a term and on patronal feast days. The students also attend extra Masses during Lent, before examinations and at the end of term. The school also organises retreats for the students at the beginning of every school year, which is incorporated with orientation into the new academic year. Apart from the retreat, there are regular talks by different priests to help students deepen their faith and build up their spirituality. Wednesday is reserved for confessions. The school also prepares students for the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Though not all staff members of the school are Catholic, they are fully integrated into the religious aspect of the school. The school has a 40% Catholic and 60% non-Catholic staff profile. Every morning at 7:45 a.m, the teachers meet to have a short shared prayer before classes begin. According to the principal, each teacher takes turns to lead the prayer. After this, each teacher goes to their registered class to pray with the students. The principal expresses the joy of having a pastor from a different denomination on the staff. The principal feels that this pastor contributes immensely to the spiritual life of the school. The school has an assembly on Mondays which begins with prayers. Furthermore, the principal indicated that there is team teaching of religious education on Wednesdays, and on Fridays. Religious education takes place in individual classrooms.

Academically the school has room for improvement. Table 2.9 below provides detailed Matric results of School 5 from 2001 to 2004.

Table 2.9: School 5 Matric results from 2001 to 2004

Year	No. of candidates	Pass	Pass with merit	Pass with distinction	Matriculation exemption	% passed with exemption
2001	34	26	8	-	20	58.8
2002	41	41	12	3	27	65.9
2003	47	44	7	1	28	59.6
2004	31	31	6	-	13	41.9

(Source: the Western Cape Education Department)

From Table 2.9, some inconsistencies in the Matric results of School 5 are evident. In 2001 the percentage of those with exemption was 58.8%. It increased to 65.9% in 2002. Then in 2003 the percentage of those with exemptions dropped to 59.6%, and finally it dropped drastically to 41.9% in 2004. This inconsistency in the academic performance needs to be addressed.

2.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From what has been discussed it is evident that Catholic schools possess a unique and a distinctive character. It also appears that Catholic schools claim to have positive educational values. The goal of Catholic education is the development of the whole person. This is seen from the five schools, all of which are committed to helping the learners grow intellectually, culturally, physically and spiritually. Another important point to note is that all the schools have one ethos; which is expressed differently in each school. A common culture is evident among all the schools which is symbolised by the use of a crucifix in every room. It is also obvious that the Catholic schools in the Cape Town Archdiocese are communities serving humanity. This is evident in the number of children from different Christian denominations and other religions attending these schools. Apart from School 3 which has a 47.7% of Catholic profile, the rest each have less than 40%.

The schools do not have equal academic strength, and the fees are also different from one school to another. However, this may be more due to their socio-economic location than to the operation of the school. Table 2.10 below summarises the data from the five schools.

Table 2.10: Summary of the sample school characteristics

	Catholic Student %	**Catholic Staff %**	**Pupil: Teacher ratio**	**Average Fees**	**2004 Matric Pass %**	**Matric Exemption %**
School 1	35.0	39.1	12:1	R18, 000	97.7	65.9
School 2	37.1	60.9	18:1	R14, 300	n.a	n.a
School 3	47.7	36.0	11:1	R22, 720	100.0	98.7
School 4	18.9	42.9	30:1	R300	85.2	11.1
School 5	34.5	40.0	19:1	R6,000	100.1	41.9

n. a. = not applicable

From what has been described and discussed above, one cannot say what really motivates parents in Cape Town to choose Catholic schools for their children. The next chapter presents some theoretical frameworks behind the reasons why parents might choose schools, especially Catholic schools.

CHAPTER 3
PARENTAL CHOICE OF SCHOOLS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on parental choice of schools and to present the different theories given by various authors to explain the underlying factors behind parental choice of schools. The knowledge of these theories will provide a guideline for the design of the methodology of this study.

Allingham (2002) defines choice as selecting one or more items from a menu. The items selected are "the most effective means to satisfy the agents' preferences" (Hollis *et al.*, 1992: viii). Thus parents act rationally, in a goal-oriented fashion, to maximize their educational utility by choosing the "best" schools for their children (Wells and Crain in Cookson, 1992).

Anderson *et al.* (1997) argue that the concept of choice takes full advantage of parents' valuable knowledge about their children, and their respective talents, ability, and learning styles. This information about their children enables the parents "to make optimal choices about where their children should attend school and what kind of school might best suit their children's temperaments" (p. 8; see also Munn, 1993: 55).

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses six theoretical frameworks of parental choice in general, while section two discusses five factors influencing parental choice of Catholic schools. The theories to be discussed in section one are: 3.2.1 rational choice theory; 3.2.2 economic theory of choice; 3.2.3 class choosing theory; 3.2.4 social capital theory; 3.2.5 intrinsic-personal/social value perspective theory; and (3.2.6) instrumental-academic value perspective theory.

Section two also discusses the following factors: (1) quality of education, (2) teacher quality, (3) community dimension, (4) religious nature of the school, and (5) previous experience of a Catholic school. In section two, we shall see that parental choice of

Catholic schools is no different from parental choice in general. The reason for discussing these factors here however, is to examine other reasons some parents prefer religious schools, in this case Catholic schools.

Two research works have been chosen as a base for this study. Potter and Hayden's (2004) study of parental choice of schools in Argentina, and Flynn's (1993) study of parental choice of Catholic schools in Australia. The two studies capture the theories and factors under discussion. I have chosen these studies because of the contextual similarities between this study and that of the two studies. The two studies and this are both about private schools and parental choice.

3.2 THEORIES OF CHOICE

This section is about theories of choice; it discusses parental choice theories in general. There are different theories of choice because it is contested and parental choice is a complex process, it is not based on one or two isolated factors but on a pattern of interacting factors. The purpose of this is to present an overview of how these theories contribute to the understanding and explanation of individual choice. The first theory to be discussed is rational choice theory followed by economic theory of choice, class choosing theory, social capital theory, intrinsic-personal/social value perspective theory and instrumental-academic value perspective theory.

3.2.1 Rational choice theory

In Scot's (2000) view, rational choice theory and economic theory have similar principles. Although this implies that the two can be treated as one, it can be argued that in rational choice theory people make decisions from value preferences. In economic theory on the other hand, people make decisions based on economic returns Scot (2000). For this reason and for the purpose of this study, I will separate the two and discuss them separately, beginning with rational choice.

Allingham (2002) argue that rational choice identifies the individual with a set of objectives, and treats an action as rational because it is the one most likely to satisfy those

objectives. In this sense rational choice can be defined as the choices of actions which best satisfy a person's objectives (Kaisla (2003). According to Kaisla these objectives are treated as desires which motivate the individual (ibid).

Kaisla (2003) maintains that all human behaviour can be brought within the scope of rational choice because "anything that individual could conceivably want or value can be included within the 'preferences' that motivate them" (p. x). According to Wells and Crain (in Cookson, 1992), people create bundles of opinions by arranging their preferences before choosing among various alternatives.

Rational choice theory suggests that an individual will choose an alternative that maximises his or her utility in any given situation (Coleman in Kaisla, 2003). In rational choice theory, parents are utility maximisers who make decisions from clear value preferences (Bosetti, 2004). For example, parents might choose religious schools because of their preferences for religious, moral and spiritual values. This point will be discussed in detail in section two.

According to Kaisla, "an action can be said to be rational if the individual has reason to believe that her chosen course of action is the best means to attain what she or he is aiming at" (2003: 247). (Scot 2002) also claims that decisions about education progression are made on the basis of calculations of the cost, benefit and probabilities of success of various options. For Bosetti, parents making decisions regarding their children's education rely on their personal values and subjective desired goals of education (in Ball, 2003).

According to. Coleman and Fararo (1992), rational choice theory assumes that "social outcomes constitute the equilibrium that emerges from the aggregation and interaction of individual actions" (p.138). It also assumes that people approach all actions in the same way, examining cost and benefits and acting so as to maximize their profit

Bosetti (2004) claims that in general, parents are able to demand action effectively from local schools and teachers and that, parents can be relied upon to pursue the best interests of their children. According to Coleman and Fararo (1992), rational choice is formed by "economic calculations and transactions" (p.138). However, Bosetti (2004) maintains that "parental choice is far more complex than the result of individual rational calculations of the economic return of their investment in a particular educational option" (p. 388). Bosetti argue that rational choice has a cost- benefit structure; and that economics is based on the idea of rational choice for a single agent.

Though I indicated earlier that rational choice theory and economic theory of choice would be discussed separately, there seems to be a connection between the two. The discussion of the economic theory of choice will help pinpoint the difference.

3.2.2 Economic theory of choice

According to Bast and Welberg (2003), parental choice of schools for their children is grounded in economic theory. Bast and Welberg (2003) argue that, "the prediction that parents would do a better job choosing schools for their children than experts in government agencies is well grounded in economic theory" (p. 432). They maintain that the parental choice of schools for their children is based on their assessment of costs and benefits, the availability of information, and existence of opportunity.

Scot (2002) points out that parents view education as an investment requiring detailed career planning which begins at an early age. Scot claims that economic theory assumes that people are motivated by money and by the possibility of making profit. This explains why parents choose good schools for their child, with the aim to get financial return in future.

According to the Argentean study of Potter and Hayden (2004), parents choose schools for economic reasons. Their study involved two bilingual schools. Their study shows that parents in Argentina choose the schools that they think can help their children gain advantage. This is especially true in relation to the global competition for credentials.

Potter and Hayden point out that parents choose bilingual schools because these schools offer "opportunity to becoming fluent in English-the lingua franca of the global economy" (p. 90). Potter and Hayden claim that when people have to pay for education they are more likely to make investment decisions that will help them realise an economic return.

Flynn (1993) adds to this theory by noting that parents tend to choose schools that they think will enable their children to continue their studies and so get a job. In support of Flynn's contribution, Saulwick *et al.*(1998) express that parents choose schools that will give their children "a background which, if referred to, might give them an advantage when seeking employment or in other phases of post-school life" (p.4).
The economic theory argues that a well-educated child is more likely to achieve financial independence and become a happy adult (Bast and Welberg, 2003). This financially independent and a happy adult, according to the theory, will then be able to provide assistance and comfort in the parents' old age. Most parents consider their children as a source of income or satisfaction. Children could also be considered in an economic term "a consumption good" (p. 432). In addition, Saulwick *et al.* (1998) argue that parents choose schools that will give their children enough skills and knowledge to allow them to build a future economically and socially. They maintain that when choosing schools parents are more influenced by traditional notions of economic security and social economic achievement.

According to Cookson (1992), educational attainment is a necessary element for status and economic maintenance and achievement. He claims that "there is great demand for high-status education credentials" (p. 76). Therefore "high-status parents will use whatever means available to enrol their children in the highest-status schools" (ibid). According to Cookson, this investment in high-status education will lead to high-status employment (ibid). As Weber (in Cookson, 1992) states, culturally based status is "in constant competition either to maintain their privileged status or to gain a more privileged status, and that struggle -for wealth, power, and prestige- is carried out primarily through social institutions, such as schools" (p. 76).

Though parents have the option to choose schools for their children, it is often only wealthy parents who are the only ones who can "afford to take advantage of this opportunity with the hope of providing a better education for their children..." (Anderson *et al.*, 1997: 7).

According to Roker (in Hatcher, 1998), middle-class parents believe that paying for a private education for their children will provide them with an edge over other children in the competitive world of academic success and a high-status career. In addition, Gewirtz (in Hatcher 1998) also points out that middle-class parents invest a great deal of effort in examining and comparing schools and matching them to their children's needs. This class effect is discussed next.

3.2.3 Class choosing theory

Goldring (1999) claims that parents of a higher social class are most likely to exercise choice. Gewirtz *et al.* (1995) refer to the exercise of choice in accordance with one's social class as "class choosing" (p. 24). Henceforth this will be referred to as 'class choosing theory'.

Gewirtz *et al.* (1995) identify three broad groups of choosers, defined according to their position in relation to the market: the privileged skilled chooser, the semi-skilled chooser and the disconnected chooser (p. 24). I shall discuss each one of these choosers briefly. The privileged/skilled choosers are middle-class parents; and the semi-skilled choosers are overwhelmingly working class (ibid). Gewirtz *et al.* emphasize that choice is completely social, and that it is a process which is "powerfully informed by the lives people lead and their biographies -in short, their position within a social network" (p. 24).

Gewirtz *et al.*, (1995) claim that privileged/skilled choosers are able to translate school systems and organization, and draw distinctions between schools in terms of policy and practices. In addition the privileged/skilled choosers are able to engage with and question teachers and school managers, to critically examine teachers' responses, and collect, scrutinize and interpret various sources of information (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Willms,

1997). According to Gewirtz *et al.*, most of these privileged/skilled choosers have "some kind of inside knowledge of education systems and the way they work" (1995: 26).

According to Gewirtz *et al.*'s view, the privileged/skilled choosers engage in a process of child matching. That is to say, these parents are looking to find a school which will match "the particular proclivities, interests, aspirations and/or personality of their child" (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995: 28). For some parents, the child matching is driven by very precise academic concerns and aspirations related to their child. These parents have been referred to as goal-oriented parents.

Potter and Hayden's study also shows that these type of choosers consider the curriculum used. For the parents in Argentina, the curriculum is a "necessary component to achieving high standards. For others, "the child-matching is more generalized or is related to more immediate concerns about their child's happiness or ability to cope or flourish at school" (Oldron and Boulton in Gewirtz *et al.,* 1995: 28). Some other privileged/skilled choosers look for a balance and blend of factors specific to the needs of their child. Potter and Hayden also state that, in Argentina, some parents consider school reputation extremely important (2004).

Echoles and Willms (in Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995), indicate that some parents will be looking for schools with social/reputation and disciplinary climate. Echols and Willms maintain that "in all this examination results can play a part in 'sizing up' schools but is one indicator among others and is rarely of overriding importance" (in Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995: 29). Gewirtz *et al.* argue that these parents make a choice for "the whole package, they do not want an examination factory" (1995: 29). In line with this, Bernstein (in Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995) also points out that the parents are "concerned much more with expressive order of the school, that is the complex of behavior and activities in the school which are to do with conduct, character and manner" (ibid: 29). Slaughter and Schnieder (in Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995) refer to this as "holistic choosing" (p. 30).

Gewirtz *et al.*, state that different parents will react to the same schools in these respects differently, "partly because the very aspects which repel some attract others and partly because the interpretations of atmosphere differ in themselves (1995: 31). To this effect, Gewirtz *et al.* stress that choice is oriented to and informed by class thinking. For Gewirtz *et al.* social class groups interpret schools in different ways. "What they 'see' and 'know' of school is different and is related to different systems of values and relevance" (p. 38). The semi-skilled choosers for example, have a different understanding of school choice.

The semi-skilled choosers tend to come from a variety of class backgrounds. This group of choosers is strongly inclined to engage with the education market but have limited capacity to engage 'effectively' with it. They do not have the appropriate skills to exploit it to their children's advantage (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995). In addition, Gewirtz *et al.* state that the cultural capital of the semi-skilled choosers is "[i]n the wrong currency and they are less able to accumulate the right sort" (1995: 40). Furthermore, many of the semi-skilled choosers are oriented to the same schools as the privileged/skilled choosers but may have to settle for the local and community schools. This is because their biographies and family histories "have not provided them with the experiences or inside knowledge of the school system and the social contacts and cultural skills to pursue their inclination to choice effectively" (ibid).

According to Gewirtz *et al.*, this group of choosers is less at ease in the medium of school choice than the privileged/skilled choosers (bid). Gewirtz *et al.* claim that "these families talk about potential school choices as outsiders" (ibid: 82). Semi-skilled choosers may also be impeded by finance-related matters including time and transport; as a result they look for the nearest school with a strong disciplinary climate and a positive social atmosphere (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Willms, 1997). For the semi-skilled choosers "the process of school choice is abstract, more a matter of finding the 'good' school, rather than the 'right' one" (ibid: 44). The third choosers which Gewirtz *et al.* (1995) identify is disconnected choosers. These choosers, like the semi-skilled choosers, view schools differently. They are not keen in engaging in school choice, probably due to their social position. They are almost exclusively working class.

According to Gewirtz *et al.*, these types of choosers are disconnected from the market in the sense that they are not inclined to engage with it. They limit themselves to basically two schools, that is "schools in close physical proximity and part of their social community" (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995: 44). Disconnected choosers supposedly focus on primarily the local schools, "partly as a result of a positive attachment to the locality and to going to school with friends and family" (ibid: 182-183). Gewirtz *et al.* indicate that the disconnected parents want a good education for their children in their local school. For them, there is no need to seek out a good education elsewhere. They do not feel the need to examine all of the alternatives but like the semi-skilled choosers, choose a good local school that has a strong disciplinary climate and reputation (Willms, 1997).

In addition, "school has to be 'fitted into' a set of constraints and expectations related to the demands of working and household organization" (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995: 183). Furthermore, because of their low-income, the limitation of private and public transport plays a major role in decision-making (ibid). Though the disconnected choosers have limited capacity for participating in the education market, they make active choices (ibid).

Gewirtz *et al.*, claim that choice has different meanings in different class and cultural contexts; "it is a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon; and families are disadvantaged or privileged/skilled as a consequence of the values which inform their conceptions of choice making" (1995: 183). Parents make choices based on their perceived class and "in some instances racial composition of schools" (ibid: 184).

The three types of choosers discussed above can be identified in my research population. The socio-economic situation of each of the sample schools shows that there are indeed different types of choosers, which we shall see in the analysis undertaken in Chapter Five of this study. Parental choice is also influenced by one's social structure which Bourdieu (in Ball, 2003) and Coleman (1990) refer to as social capital. Social capital theory is the next discussion and it relates to class choosing theory in the following ways. Social

capital helps to maintain one's class position and places one in a better position to take advantage of the educational market.

3.2.4. Social capital theory

Ball (2003) views parental choice of schools as deployment of social capital. Here we refer to it as social capital theory. The function of the concept 'social capital' identified by Coleman (1990) is those aspects of social structure that actors can use to realize their interests. According to Ball (2003), Coleman views social capital as being "embedded within families, in the relationships between children and parents and the structure and organization of the family itself and family life" (p. 80).

Ball (2003) claims that, for Bourdieu, social capital "works within social groups and networks in the form of exchange, social obligations and symbols, to define group of membership, fix boundaries and create a sense of belonging" (p. 80). Morrow views Bourdieu's notion of social capital as "essentially a theory of privilege rather than a theory of inadequacy" (in Ball, 2003: 80). In bringing social capital into effective action, parents demonstrate its uses and introduce their children to means of making their own social capital (Allatt in Ball, 2003).

Allatt (in Ball, 2003) maintains that through the perceptions, practices and interactions of social agents, social structures are produced. Privilege depends on purposeful activity directed towards the maintenance of class position (ibid). For Ball, social and cultural capital combine in various ways. The two are intertwined and interdependent with economic and emotional capital. Ball argues that "the combination of these is often what makes the middle-class family so effective in the educational domain" (2003: 82). Ball indicates that when parents invest in private education for their children they are buying into a broad and complex body of social capital. This is made available to their children and in relation to which children develop their own investment skills (ibid).

According to Coleman (1990), an important form of social capital is the potential for information that exists essentially in social relations. He claims that "information is

important in providing a basis for action" (p. 310). Ball claims that within the process of choice parents seeks to activate an excess of social capital and a range of social skills, using networks. According to Ball, these networks and the social capital that they generate are strongly class based.

In Coleman's view (in Ball, 2003), the success of children in school and society depends on the ability of parents to "build social capital with the family in the form of communication, trust and a sense of shared responsibility" (p. 108). Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (in Ball, 2003) argue that to fight for one's child is "something that middle class parents are more emotionally and materially equipped and discursively positioned to do" (p. 108). The middle class orientation is produced by and feeds into the fears and anxieties of the middle-class. This is especially true in connection to social reproduction and is a key to the notion of investment in the child (Prout in Ball, 1993).

Ball (2003) argues that "the use of and investment in social capital requires and produces cultural and emotional capital" (p. 109). In support of Ball's argument, Bowe *et al.* (1994) claim that "those parents who possess the cultural capital which enables them to read the signs and images are clearly better placed to take advantage of the educational market" (p. 44).

In addition to the above theories, Woods, Bagley and Glatter (1998) develop two other theories to explain alternative reasons for parental choice. They are: intrinsic-personal/social value perspective and instrumental-academic value perspective.

3.2.5 Intrinsic-personal/social value perspective theory

This theory, according to Woods et al. (1998), represents a general focus on the child, his or her development as a growing person, as well as "the social relationships and experiences provided by the school" (p. 170).

The authors closely connect this theory to personal, social and pastoral aspects of schooling. They state that many of the elements in the theory are valued for themselves

and for their immediate day-to-day impact, rather than as means to more distant ends or to ends. Thus, according to Woods *et al.*, the intrinsic-personal/social value perspective is concerned with "process, the child's feelings and day to day experience at the school; the quality of his or her relationships there; and the support, concern and general care to be provided by the school" (p. 170). This pastoral care is fundamentally important for parents. Coldron and Boulton (in Woods *et al.*, 1998) emphasise the importance of the child's happiness in school choice.

Potter and Hayden's (2004) study again capture this theory. Their study shows that parents in Argentina value the pastoral care of the schools. These parents claim that "caring schools [are] important" (p.103). According to Potter and Hayden, the parents "want a caring school with good pupil-teacher relationships" (ibid). They also indicate that the parents in Argentina consider discipline an important element of schooling. For the parents "discipline creates the order required for learning to take place: 'a disciplined classroom also helps children to learn because order is conducive to work' and can affect values held" (ibid).

In Woods *et al.'s* (1998) view, the intrinsic personal/social aspect of schooling can be used for differing interpretation in specific terms: Woods *et al.* state that "some parents might seek a religious dimension; some may emphasize discipline; others may stress creativity and expression, whilst still others could lay emphasis on an ethos characterized by competition, order and camaraderie" (p. 171). Woods *et al.* explain the importance of the intrinsic-personal/social aspect of schooling for parents. They express that the importance of the intrinsic-personal/social aspect of schooling for parents is grounded in the fact that the parental perspective tends to be located around the child as a person. They state that "the capabilities, fears, ambitions, likes and dislikes, friendships, emotional nature, sensitivities, strengths and weaknesses of the growing person in their midst, and his or her friendships" (ibid) are developed over a period in the family and "the child himself or herself brings a direct view of these into the process of considering school"(ibid).

Woods and colleagues argue that the child's development in the true sense is bound up with experiences of childhood, amongst which is the experience of schooling (1998). According to Woods *et al.* (1998), parents are aware that these experiences "can scar for life, or uplift the child for life, or at least provide periods of happiness and fulfillment in a difficult world" (p. 171). For this reason, the school is not seen basically in an instrumental perspective. Instead the end results or outcomes of schooling are fundamental in the experience of schooling.

In Woods *et al.'s* view, the knowledge of the experiences of childhood inspires parents. The study conducted by Potter and Hayden (2004) in Argentina captured this theory in their study. Through their study they discover that when choosing schools, some parents give value to "what has been termed 'happiness', 'security' or 'process' criteria rather than 'product' criteria such as examination results" (p.91). According to Potter and Hayden, various aspect of a school can all affect a child's happiness and feeling of security. Their study reveals that many parents choose the schools where they think their children would be happy and cared for.

The intrinsic-personal/social value perspective theory suggests that parents, especially the working-class, take into account the fact that local schools mean that a child's friends will be in the school and that it is near and convenient (Woods *et al.,* 1998). The instrumental-academic value perspective theory on the other hand emphasises academic achievement.

3.2.6 Instrumental-academic value perspective theory

The instrumental-academic value perspective theory is in line with Bernstein's concept of a school's instrumental order, which focuses on the acquisition of specific skills (in Woods *et al.,* 1998). According to Bernstein, the concept of school's instrumental order emphasises outcomes. Elliot (in Walford, 1996) refers to this as product criteria. Parents who associate themselves with the theory of instrumental-academic value perspective choose schools with a sound educational structure and a good examination record. As Fox (in Walford, 1996) mentions, "the most frequently voiced criteria for choice were

related to the perception that these schools could produce better academic results and develop character through discipline" (p.56).

The dominant tendency of this theory is towards the achievement of academic qualification. Potter and Hayden (2004) show in their study that most parents in Argentina value high academic standard, which can be considered the core around which parental choice of schools in Argentina revolves. Their study shows that "high-quality education, academic excellence and an atmosphere or ethos conducive to work in a friendly school environment are what parents are looking for" (p. 106).

Saulwick *et al.* (1998) maintain that parents choose schools that give good instruction enabling good grades necessary for tertiary entry. Woods *et al.* (1998) attribute concern for academic qualification to middle-class parents. According to them, "middle-class parents are more likely to be concerned with school reputation, having six-form, academic standards, school atmosphere and examination results" (1998: 125; see also Willms, 1997). Furthermore, Woods *et al.* maintain that middle-class parents place a high premium on academically oriented factors (1998).

Again the study of Potter and Hayden (2004) in Argentina agrees with the theory. For some parents, particularly middle-class parents, "quality of education and academic excellence appear to be what matter" (p.91). According to them, these parents choose schools that maintain high standards of discipline and academic performance. They maintain that the parents put "discipline and academic factors well before their children's happiness and caring environment" (p. 93). In support of this, Peterson (2003) indicates that "most parents expect an orderly, disciplined school, where learning can go forward unimpeded by rowdiness and conflict" (p. 4). In addition, Potter and Hayden's study also reveals that for some parents, a school's reputation is of paramount importance.

An Australian study conducted by Flynn (1993) also confirms the theory of instrumental-academic value perspective. Flynn claims that parents are influenced by quality education, and that this quality education among other things involves, "the sound

curriculum offered by the schools, class size, academic standard ... and the social standing or prestige of the school" (p. 403). Flynn's study shows that parents assign the highest priority to the academic development of their children. I shall discuss this quality education in more detail in the next section.

From this discussion of the theories it is clear that none of them is adequate in themselves. Because of the complexity of parental choice, as we have seen in the review, the theories need to be combined to produce a comprehensive theory for parental choice. Parental choice is based on several reasons and not just on one or two reasons. In the next section, I will discuss five factors influencing parental choice of Catholic schools and also review Flynn's work of parental choice of Catholic schools in Australia. This, together with Potter and Hayden's work, forms the base for my study.

3.3 PARENTAL CHOICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

This section is about parental choice of Catholic schools. It is based mainly on Flynn's (1993) work. In Chapter Two a number of qualities and values were uncovered regarding Catholic education. These included all-round development of students, community and religious values and the role of Catholic teachers in the lives of students. It appears that these factors contribute to parental choice of Catholic schools elsewhere and this section discusses them further. The 'all-round development of students' is referred to as quality of education and thus this section discusses: (3.3.1) quality of education, (3.3.2) teacher quality, (3.3.3) community dimension, (3.3.4) religious nature of the schools, and (3.3.5) previous experience of a Catholic school.

These factors are embedded in the theories discussed in section one of this chapter, with the exception of 'previous experience of a Catholic school'. For example, 'quality of education' and 'teacher quality' are subsets of 'instrumental-academic value perspective theory' and 'intrinsic-personal/social value theory'. The community dimension and religious value can also be found in the 'intrinsic-personal/social value theory'. However, the factors are discussed separately in this section because literature on parental choice of Catholic schools discussed them separately. Secondly, these factors need to be

emphasised separately in order to discover if the qualities and values identified in Chapter Two are the motivating factors of parental choice of Catholic schools. The fifth factor has not yet been captured in any of the theories.

I begin this section with the discussion of quality of education.

3.3.1. Quality of education

The discussion of this factor will be brief because some of the points have already been captured in the discussion on the 'instrumental-academic value theory' and the 'intrinsic-personal/social value theory' in section 3.2. For parents, quality of education includes the academic standard of the schools, class sizes and facilities, extra-curricula activities, and discipline and all-round development (Flynn, 1993). Donnellan (2004) in his article, 'Why choose a Catholic school', presents some of the reasons why parents choose Catholic schools. He points out that many parents choose Catholic schools because they believe that Catholic schools possess superior academic and moral teaching. Flynn's (1993) study of parental choice of Catholic schools in Australia captured this factor. His study involved 12 High Schools.

Flynn's study revealed that parents in Australia are attracted by the quality of education offered at Catholic schools. He claims that as a result of this quality education, many parents in Australia who choose Catholic schools believe that their children will be well prepared for further studies at University and will consequently secure a job.

Flynn (1993) indicates that parents in Australia are attracted by the small classes of Catholic schools. According to him, the parents believe that the high academic performance achieved in Australian Catholic schools is due to the class sizes and facilities available at the school. Flynn also points out that parents in Australia value not only small classes, but also schools that administer discipline. According to him, the parents are of the opinion that Catholic schools have stronger discipline. They assume that the high academic standard at these schools is partly a result of discipline.

These factors which attract the parents in Australia, that is, the small class and discipline, will be tested in my research method. Parents in Cape Town may have different reasons for choosing Catholic schools for their children.

Flynn's study also shows that parents in Australia see Catholic schools as committed to the holistic education they want for their children. Saulwick *et al.* (1998) explain this holistic education by saying that parents want schools to "help the young person grow morally, intellectually, creatively, socially, culturally, as well as physically" (p. 6). Furthermore, many parents want their children to be happy in school. They want them to learn how to learn, and to find out about themselves and the society in which they live. In addition, they want them to develop a set of values, to become rounded human beings, to be confident and develop leadership qualities (ibid). They believe that religious schools are capable of helping their children to achieve all that (ibid).

From what have has been said, parents seem to be concerned about holistic education. For this reason, this will also be tested in the next chapter. Apart from quality education, parents are also influenced by the dedication, commitment and quality of teachers (Praetz and Partington in Flynn, 1993).

3.3.2 Teacher quality

Praetz and Partington (in Flynn, 1993) influenced Flynn's study. Praetz claims that parents are attracted by the quality of teaching factor in Catholic schools. Flynn's study on parental choice of Catholic schools in Australia testifies to Praetz's claim. According to Flynn, parents tend to base their choice of Catholic schools on the following indicators of teacher quality: "the quality and dedication of teachers; good standard of teaching in the school; the standard of discipline and behavior in the classroom" (1993: 403). Flynn maintains that some parents base their decision on the quality of the teaching staff. Parents recognize that a caring principal and competent teachers are essential if their children are to receive the best education at school (ibid).

Parents perceive religious schools as demonstrating greater commitment to intellectual standards, teacher quality and student discipline (Flynn, 1993). Some parents believe that "teachers in these schools are more likely to see teaching in terms of a vocation as well as a profession" (Parington in Flynn, 1993: 128). According to Pablo Casals (in Flynn, 1993), teaching "involves the development in students of the beliefs and values considered most fundamental to human living" (p. 403). In Flynn's terms, teaching is the process of shaping the distinctively human personality and character of students (1993). For parents, Catholic school teachers are committed to developing the human personality and character of students as mentioned by Flynn.

Parents who choose Catholic schools believe that Catholic school teachers will devote time to helping students with difficulties. In addition, the teachers in Catholic schools "are caring and willing to assist students" and "have a professional attitude towards their teaching" (Flynn, 1993: 403). Again, some parents comment that in Catholic schools "the staff work extremely hard, care very much for the students and generally set a good example. They are approachable and give up their own time to help them... The discipline is consistent and strong and based on a tradition of caring" (ibid: 138). The parents add that quality of teaching in Catholic schools is of a good standard.

In addition to the good standard of teaching, parents are also encouraged by the quality of teacher-pupil relationship in Catholic schools. Dorman and Fraser (in Flynn and Mok, 2000) claim that the classroom environment in Catholic schools "embraces the interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, the relationships amongst peers, the standard of teaching in the classroom, the quality of classroom organization and the standards expected of students by teachers" (p. 188). In his study of parental choice of Catholic schools, Flynn observes that the students' relationships with teachers tend to be warm and positive in a professional sense. Flynn's study shows that students' relationships with teachers contribute to the strong sense of community extant in Catholic schools.

Cardinal Hume (in Feheney, 1998) also added that the teachers' job is to help develop their students' ability to form relationships and to be part of a living and loving community. He sees teachers' jobs as highly skilled, and vitally important. Hume sees a school as a community and it is the task of the teacher to nurture it. This community dimension of Catholic schools is another factor that attracts parents.

3.3.3. Community dimension

The sense of community, which exists in Catholic schools, is confirmed by Anthony Bryk (in Feheney, 1998). He claims that "Catholic schools were notably successful in transforming themselves from educational institutions into communities of learning that promote the pastoral care of their students" (p. 86). I refer to this sense of community as the community dimension factor. The community dimension factor is also captured in Flynn's (1993) study. He maintains that most parents in Australia choose Catholic schools because of "care and sense of community which students experience at school" (p.125). This community dimension of Catholic schools has also been referred to as "social capital" by James Coleman, Thomas Hoffer and Nancy Lesko (in Flynn, 1993: 88). These authors claim that "the community dimension of Catholic schools has increasingly come to be interpreted in terms of the social capital of these schools" (p. 88).

In this section social capital is used to describe the relationship that exists amongst stakeholders of Catholic schools. This has become a driving force of parental choice of these schools, and is not the same as the social capital theory in section one. Flynn's study shows that parents believe that Catholic schools "provide an atmosphere of Christian community where students have concern for one another" (Flynn, 1993: 169). In addition, parents expect that the schools will nurture their children with care; allow them to develop as well-rounded human beings; and instill in their children self-discipline and respect for others (Saulwick *et al.*, 1998).

According to Professor Neal (in Flynn, 1993), "this family quality is a uniqueness which Catholic schools could, I believe, develop. Their great success in making the school a

natural part of the home and the Church – an undivided Trinity – is an educational gift which Catholics have to offer the rest of us" (p. 87).

Coleman (in Flynn, 1993) also emphasises that "the school proves the kind of social-psychological resource which sharply reduces the likelihood of dropping out of high school" (p. 88). Coleman and Hoffer identify the social capital of the school with the network of social relationships which surround learners and suggest that this social capital is an important resource available in Catholic schools. They add that a "social network of relations is found in Catholic schools which combines with church and parish to form a supportive enclave of adults who, with their children, are united around a system of shared beliefs and values about the nature and role of education" (p. 89).

Donnellan (2004) indicates that parents choose Catholic schools for their children because they believe that, in Catholic schools, children receive individual attention. Parents claim that "everyone cares more at Catholic schools. The teachers care more about students, the parents care more about the school. The administration cares more for parental concerns. And the students care more about their education and for one another" (p. 2). In addition, Coleman (in Greeley, 1998) argues that Catholic schools "are indeed the 'Common Schools' in that they did for the disadvantaged what the public schools claim to do but, in fact, fail to do" (p.182). He attributes this success to "the 'social capital' they have at their disposal" (ibid).

Bryk (in Feheney, 1998) also contributes to this by saying that Catholic schools gain from a network of supportive social relations, characterised by trust, which makes up a form of social capital. Bryk sees this social capital as situated "in the reactions among school professionals and with their parent communities" (p. 87). The community dimension of Catholic schools which reinforces family values makes these schools unique. The community dimension factor will also be tested in my research. McElroy (2002) claims parents choose religious schools for their children because they believe that in religious schools "teachers support their values" (p.6). Besides the community dimension factor, parents are also influenced by the religious nature of the schools.

3.3.4 Religious nature of the schools

According to McElroy (2002), violence in public schools is on the rise. Therefore some parents consider religious schools a "haven" (p. 6). They also assume that in religious schools students would be good to one another because of the moral values the schools uphold (ibid). In addition, many parents see today's society as lacking core values and discipline. They want these values inculcated in their children and believe that religious schools are likelier than state schools to do this (Saulwick *et al.*, 1998). For Boeffetti (2001), parents consider Catholic schools as not just offering the superior academic performance that parents want for their children, but also the kind of moral and religious instruction that public education has become allergic to.

Many parents accept that they have the primary responsibility for the moral upbringing of their children, but look to the school to reinforce this (Saulwick *et a*l., 1998). Most parents view religious schools as able to instill the virtues of honesty and moral courage; honour the Golden Rule; teach children to accept people of all ethnic and religious backgrounds, and promote democracy (Boeffetti, 2001). According to Saulwick *et al.* (1998), some parents are not greatly interested in the actual education load teachers provide their children. What they want is a Christian environment that will allow their children to become good citizens. Again, they want their children to develop "self-discipline, high self-esteem, and moral values" and to develop into "decent kids" (p. 7).

For Flynn, (1993) "the religious nature of a Catholic school is an integral dimension of the parents' choice" (p. 141). Flynn claims that an expressive symbol of the integration of faith and life is evident at the Catholic school, and parents are conscious of this when they are making the choice. In his study of parental choice of Catholic schools in Australia, Flynn records what a parent had to say: "I am always proud to say my children have attended a Catholic school. I feel it carries an unspoken message. The Catholic school can be depended on for discipline and moral and religious values. It is far better to give children every opportunity to be instructed in faith in God..." (p. 139).

Praetz (in Flynn,1993) also points out that the reasons which parents give for choosing Catholic schools rest on the symbolic importance attached to Catholic education. For many Catholic parents, the established relationship between their faith and the cluster of symbols and institutions which have nourished it are weakening. Therefore, choosing Catholic schools for their children will help to revitalize their faith. In short many parents want to perpetuate their Catholic faith and feel that choosing Catholic schools will be a way forward. As Saulwick *et al.* mention, people with strong religious beliefs or people who wish to perpetuate their religious cultures choose religious schools for their children (1998).

In addition, Hook (in Clark, 2003) observes that religious schools provide a good education within a biblical perspective and teach young people how to live for Jesus Christ. Parents view religious schools as being deeply committed to turning out kind and respectful children (Hook in Clark, 2003). For many parents the religious dimension of the schools' programme is of vital importance. The school's religious education programme is connected to "the spiritual practices of students" (Flynn, 1993: 227). According to Flynn, the spirituality of students should be nurtured through religious practice and other forms of spirituality. Flynn mentions that some parents think that Catholic schools offer students opportunity to pray regularly. He claims that students witness the example of teachers who pray. "Such experiences can affirm their efforts and provide models that they can adapt to their own personalities and situation" (p. 227).

Another aspect of the religious nature of the school which parents admire is liturgical celebrations. As Flynn mentions, "participation in liturgical celebrations, particularly the Eucharist, adds a special dimension to the religious education programme" (p. 227). Parents see the religious education programme which the schools offer as an opportunity for students to reflect on their own lives and commit themselves to God (ibid). Flynn claims that, parents believe that in Catholic schools children are taught how to be sensitive to the needs of others. Children are taught how to apply the religious education classes to their lives, especially through participation in different service or outreach programmes (1993).

Feheney (1998) points out that parents are influenced by the pastoral care programme at the school. According to him, "Catholic schools, by definition are involved in pastoral care because they are committed to the education of the whole person" (p. 85). Thus parents see the Catholic school environment as a place where children are encouraged to grow and develop as individuals and where their talents would be revealed and helped to flourish. They see it as a place where their children, especially the gentle or the timid ones, are safe and protected (Saulwick *et al.*, 1998).

Again, as Flynn indicates, parents are convinced that "moral values taught at home are supported by the school" (1993:403). Saulwick *et al.* support this by saying that parents want schools where their religious values or ethnic culture is particularly important to them (1998). Furthermore, Saulwick *et al.* emphasise that parents want a school where these values are not in conflict, but rather are consistent with, the culture and values of their home environment.

Apart from the above factors, there is another factor which Carpenter and Western (in Flynn, 1993) consider as one of the motivating factors for parental choice of Catholic schools. This factor is the previous experience of a Catholic school.

3.3.5 Previous experience of a Catholic school

According to Carpenter and Western (in Flynn, 1993) the choice of a Catholic school by parents is "mediated by their own attendance at a Catholic school" (p. 133). In the days of their schooling, the parents viewed Catholic schools as having a stronger discipline and value system. The authors argue therefore that there is a strong likelihood that those who have attended a Catholic school before will choose a Catholic school for their children's education (ibid). According to Saulwick *et al* (1998), some parents know which school they want their children to attend. Since those parents who attended a Catholic school make a success of their lives, they think it will also be good for their children. They want their children to have a similar experience to them.

3.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the above chapter, six theories and five factors were discussed in two different sections. The factors discussed in section two were not different from the theories discussed in section one; the factors were embedded in the theories, particularly in the 'instrumental academic value perspective theory' and 'intrinsic-personal/social value perspective theory'. The factors were discussed separately basically because they needed to be emphasised separately in order to discover if the qualities and values identified in Catholic education in Chapter Two are the motivating factors of parental choice of Catholic schools. In Chapter Two, it was suggested that Catholic education emphasises holistic education, and moral and community values.

The theories and factors discussed have revealed the complexity of parental choice of schools. Each theory explains the motive behind parental choice and it should be noted that none of the theories is adequate in themselves because of the complexity of choice. Therefore they need to be combined to produce a comprehensive theory for parental choice. Parents based their choice of schools on various factors and not just one or two isolated factors as was seen from the discussions in both sections.

From the literature review, it is clear that parents have various and differing reasons for choosing a particular school for their child. The theories and factors discussed in this work represent individual reasons for making such choices. These should not be ignored when embarking on a project such as this. The theories being explored in this work informed the research section of the paper, covered in the next chapter.

In Chapter Four, the research instrument is presented as a modification of the two research works which were reviewed in the literature review. They were used because of their contextual similarities. The research instrument is also in line with the theories and factors reviewed in Chapter Three. Through the literature review, the researcher is better informed to design questions to explore the factors influencing parents' choice of Catholic schools in the Western Cape Province.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology and strategies undertaken to achieve the research goals. The research methodology includes the following: survey and population analysis, data collection and a pilot study. The method of analysis and limitations will also be discussed.

4.2 SURVEY AND POPULATION ANALYSIS

This study is a survey involving a population of 1556 parents in five Catholic secondary schools in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. Jaeger (1997) defines a survey as "a research study in which data are collected from part of a group for the purpose of describing one or more characteristics of the whole group" (p. 450). He also refers to population as "any group of persons, objects, or institutions that have at least one characteristic in common" (ibid). In this case members of the population in this study are parents from Catholic secondary schools, and all are engaged in school choice in Catholic secondary schools.

The reason for this survey was to investigate the factors influencing parental choice of Catholic schools. South Africa as a whole has 103 Catholic secondary schools and the Western Cape Province has only six Catholic secondary schools but a number of primary schools (see Chapter One for Catholic schools in South Africa). All six schools are in the Catholic Archdiocese of Cape Town in the Cape Peninsula (Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2002). Unfortunately one school declined to participate. The remaining five schools are all urban schools. Two of the schools are co-educational and combined; that is, they have both boys and girls and run from pre-school to secondary school. The remaining three schools only accept girls. One of these is a combined school while the other two only offer secondary education.

The sampled population for this study is neither a representation of the Catholic secondary schools in South Africa as whole nor a representation of the population in Western Cape. This is because 90% of the student population in Catholic schools is black (Catholic Institute of Education, 2004) and the sample does not reflect this population. As shown in Table 4.1 below, the racial distribution in the Western Cape as a whole also does not reflect the sample population in this study.

Table 4.1: Racial distribution in Catholic secondary schools in the Western Cape

Population group	All Catholic secondary schools		Western Cape		South Africa	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Black	826	39.7	1 207429	26.7	354016166	79.0
Coloured	590	28.4	2 438976	53.9	3994505	8.9
Asian	30	1.4	45030	1.0	1115467	2.5
White	634	30.5	832 901	18.4	4293640	9.6
Total	**2080**	**100.0**	**4,524336**	**100.0**	**44,819778**	**100.0**

(Sources: South Africa Yearbook, 2003 and Catholic Institute of Education, 2004)

Table 4.1 shows the full student population of the six Catholic secondary schools in the Western including the sixth non-participatory school.

Table 4.2: Racial distribution in individual schools

Population group	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5		School 6	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Black	87	32.7	-	-	-	-	420	100.0	175	60.3	144	28.0
Coloured	119	44.7	10	5.7	-	-	-	-	105	36.2	356	69.1
Asian	13	4.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.7	15	2.9
White	47	17.7	165	94.3	414	100.0	-	-	8	2.8	-	-
Total	**266**	**100.0**	**175**		**414**	**100.0**	**420**	**100.0**	**290**	**100.0**	**515**	**100.0**

(Source: Catholic Institute of Education, 2004)
Note: At School 4, Coloured and African learners are regarded as "Black".

According to Jaeger (1997), sample statistics are useful for describing the sample that provides data as well as serving as estimates of corresponding population parameters. However, the sample in this study cannot be used to describe all parents in Catholic secondary schools in the country; primarily because of racial and socio-economic differences. The racial composition of the sample is not the same as the racial composition of the population in the total population in Catholic schools in the country. However, it describes the parent population in Catholic secondary schools in the Western Cape.

Jaeger indicates that in a survey research, a questionnaire as one method of instruments of data collection and interviews can be used. In line with this, there are three instruments of data collection used in this study which include a questionnaire and interviews and they are discussed next.

4.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

There were three main type of data collection:

4.3.1 Parents' questionnaire.

Questionnaires were the main instrument used in this study because according to Brace (2004), a questionnaire provides a "standardized interview across all subjects" (p.4). Brace maintains that in questionnaires all respondents are asked the questions that are appropriate to them, and that these questions are asked in exactly the same way (ibid). He argues that "asking the questions in the same way to different people is a key to most survey research" (ibid). In addition, Brace maintains that a questionnaire helps respondents to provide accurate responses. Furthermore, "good questionnaire writing is a no-or low cost option in any survey, which has major rewards in delivering the best, or most accurate answers" (Brace 2004:2). Burns (1990) also indicates that one of the advantages of a questionnaire is the contributions it makes to the standardisation of responses. He argues that "better standardisation, particularly through the use of a structure instrument, means higher reliability" (p.482).

The questionnaire was about the factors that influenced parental choice of Catholic schools (see Appendix A).

4.3.2 School data.

This questionnaire was about student and staff population, number of different denominations in the school and Matric results. This questionnaire was designed in a tabular form and administered through the principals (See Appendix B).

4.3.3 Principals' interviews at the five sampled schools.

The interviews at the five sampled schools were about the size of the school, the character and culture of the school, the fee structure, and teachers and their religious affiliation (See Appendix C).

Brochures, leaflets and prospectus of each of the five sampled schools were also examined to obtain additional information.

Jaeger (1997) points out that it is useful to review previous research in a new survey. He adds that 'the work of others can suggest modifications or additions to research questions, survey instruments, or plan for analysis of data. In this study, literature on parental choice was reviewed and two research works were also reviewed. The main research instrument of this study was a modification of those used by the two researchers, Flynn (1993) and Potter and Hayden, (2004).

4.4 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaires were the modified ones used by Potter, Hayden and Flynn in their research (see Chapter 3). They were used because of the contextual similarities between this study and those of Potter, Hayden and Flynn. That is, both their studies and this study are conducted in the context of Catholic schools. The studies were conducted in private schools and about parental choice.

According to Burns (1997), a "layperson uses theories and concept in a loose fashion" (p.7), but a scientific researcher on the other hand, "would systematically create a 'hypothesis' and subject it to empirical test" (ibid). Burns further maintains that a scientific researcher tests theories systematically in the field or in the laboratory (ibid). In line with Burns's argument, the questionnaires for this study were designed to reflect the theories and the factors discussed in the literature review (see Chapter 3). The factors were subsets of the theories but were used separately for analytical reasons; in addition the literature of parental choice of Catholic schools uses them separately.

Thus, the questionnaire was designed according to the following structure: the community dimension of the schools (questions 8-10 & 12-13); the social capital of parents (questions 11, 15-16); parents basing their choice on their social class position (questions 14, 17, 29-30); choice base on economic reasons (questions 27-28); intrinsic personal/social perspective value provided by the school (questions 31-34); instrumental-academic perspective value (questions 19, 24-26); quality of education (questions 18, 20-22, 38 & 40); teacher quality (questions 36, 37, 39, 41-43); religious nature of the school (questions 23, 44-48); and previous experience of Catholic schools (question 35).

According to Burns (1997), three types of items can be employed in the construction of schedules and questionnaires. These are closed items, scale items and open-ended items (p.472). The questionnaires for this study had 52 items (questions). The first 7 questions were closed items; they were designed to obtain an idea of the background of the parents. Then there were 41 scale items. In these items respondents were asked to state how important a factor had been in influencing school choice. The responses to the questionnaire were indicated on a 5 point scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important). This way of collecting the data provided a clear indication of the degree of importance parents attached to each item (Brace, 2004).

The open-ended questions were Qs 49-52 where parents were asked to identify the three most important factors influencing their choice of school and to point out satisfactory and unsatisfactory aspects of the school. In the last question, parents were asked to provide

any further comments. The reason for these open-ended items was to try to get a more qualitative response from the parents.

The researcher took 1,556 questionnaires to the schools. This is the number of the entire parent population of the five sampled schools. The questionnaires were administered by the principals and the teachers of these schools. Through their children, every parent of the five schools was given a copy of the questionnaire, except the Grade 12 students who were not available at the time of the survey. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a letter in which, the parents were asked to return their responses after a week to the principals. These were later collected from the principals by the researcher.

Table 4.3 shows how the questionnaires were distributed to the schools.

Table 4.3: Distribution of questionnaires

Name of school	No. of questionnaires	No. of returns	% of returns
School 1	266	127	47.7
School 2	175	100	57.1
School 3	412	116	28.1
School 4	419	129	30.8
School 5	284	140	49.3
Total	**1,556**	**612**	**39.3**

This 39.3% return falls under the range which Jaeger (1997:452) considers to be satisfactory (10-25%).

4.5 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study with a range of 20 teachers and parents across language groups was conducted in one of the selected schools. This was done as a means of testing the survey instruments. According to Maxwell (1996), a pilot study is designed "specifically to test your ideas or methods and to explore their implications, or to inductively develop

grounded theory" (p. 44). Jaeger (1997) also emphasizes the importance of a pilot study. According to Jaeger, "a pilot survey is the main survey in miniature" (p. 469). He argues that a pilot survey must be planned in detail, and the plan should include most of the elements of the main survey. In addition, Jaeger points out that "respondents to a pilot survey are asked where the questions proposed for the main survey are clear and understandable, whether the instructions for completing survey instruments and providing data are free of ambiguities, and how long it took them to complete the main survey's instruments" (1997: 469). For Jaeger, a pilot survey is like "a dress rehearsal for the real thing" (ibid).

In line with the above, the teachers were asked to read the questions to see how long it takes to complete them. They were also asked to evaluate whether the language used was clear and understandable, whether parents would be able to complete the questions and also to see if there were any omissions of questions that could have been asked. Again they were asked to evaluate whether the questions were appropriate and sounded right. Finally, the teachers were asked to make recommendations for improving the research instrument as a whole. Their recommendations helped to restructure the main survey. Some of the original questions on the questionnaire were removed and others added. Their response encouraged me to go ahead with the survey. It took the teachers between 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. This therefore suggests that it was possible for the parents to complete the questionnaire within a reasonable time period which is important if full completion is to be achieved.

4.6 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The data from the questionnaires were entered in a Microsoft Excel spread sheet and analysed for frequencies of response. Where appropriate qualitative or open response questions were post-coded (for example Occupations in Appendix F). In addition some of the 5 point scale items were collapsed to 3 point scales for ease of presentation. The full-scale responses appear in some of the appendices.

4.7 LIMITATIONS

There were limitations in this study with regard to

4.7.1 sampling

4.7.2 the questionnaire

4.7.3 field work and

4.7.4 personal bias.

4.7.1 Sampling

As discussed earlier the sample cannot be generalized to represent the schools in South Africa or the Western Cape because of the racial and socio-economic differences.

4.7.2 The questionnaire

As with any instrument, questionnaires have intrinsic problems. Among the problems that the researcher might encounter include conceptual issues and loss of qualitative aspects. According to Brace (2004), "writing questionnaires is about helping respondents to give the best information that they can" (p.114). Therefore questions should not only be clear and unambiguous but also capture the concept. For this study, the researcher tried to avoid any ambiguity that could hinder the respondents from giving accurate information by piloting the questionnaire with teachers and parents from one of the sampled schools. The respondents to the pilot survey were asked to examine the questions proposed for the main survey and to see whether they were clear and understandable, and whether the instructions for completing the survey instruments and providing data were free of ambiguities. Piloting the questionnaires helped the researcher to improve the research instrument. The researcher also used questions from other research instruments.

4.7.3 Field work

The researcher encountered some limitations during the field work. For example, one of the six Catholic schools in the Western Cape Province dropped out and therefore a full sample of the Catholic secondary schools in the Western Cape Province was not achieved. This school was a largely working class school similar to schools 4 and 5. This

omission should not therefore affect the overall findings. Despite this, the returns of the questionnaires were encouraging. Out of the 1,556 questionnaires distributed to the total number of parents 612 (39.3%) were returned. According to Jaeger (1997), 10% or 25% of a population is enough to represent the entire population well "if the population is very small" (p.452). This therefore means that the population sampled of this study is adequate to provide reliable results.

However, the sample also excluded Grade 12 students who were not available at the time of the survey (see Table 4, Appendix D for Grade learners). The sixth school was also not included in this survey. However, this school is similar to School 5 (see Table 4.2 for racial distribution of individual school), therefore it should not limit the representation of parents in Western Cape. The third limitation is that parents who responded to the questionnaires were self-selected.

4.7.4 Personal bias

Being a Catholic and teaching in Catholic schools for some years was an asset to the researcher because he is aware of what goes on in Catholic schools. However, there was a possibility of bias in interpretation of the responses or the findings because of this religious affiliation, which is why the data format was largely quantitative.

Despite these limitations, this study still hopefully makes a valuable contribution as to what motivates parents to choose schools and Catholic schools in particular. Notwithstanding this contribution, there is still a need for further research on the topic. Future research should include sample schools in different Provinces. In addition to parental choice, further researchers should also focus on factors influencing students and teachers' choice of Catholic schools. This will produce a more complete picture of choice of Catholic schools.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS: PARENTAL CHOICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about the analysis of the research findings to determine the reasons parents choose Catholic schools. Their reasons have policy implications both for Catholic educational policy makers as well as education in general.

Questionnaires were distributed to 1556 parents in five Catholic secondary schools in the Western Cape Province to ascertain the reasons influencing their decision to have their children educated in a Catholic school. The key decision areas, as explained in chapter 3, relate to the instrumental academic values of the parents, the quality of education, teacher quality, intrinsic-personal/social value and community dimensions of the school as well as social capital, social class, and economic factors, the religious nature of the school and previous experience of Catholic schools. The data is presented in four sections. 5.2 deals with the overall results, 5.3 deals with the results by schools, 5.4 deals with most important reasons parents choose Catholic schools, while 5.5 deals with satisfactory and unsatisfactory aspects of the schools.

5.2 PARENTS OVERALL RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNNAIRE

As discussed, the parents were asked in the questionnaire to indicate how important they rated factors from a list of forty-one possible reasons. In the tables, responses 4 (very important) and 5 (extremely important) were aggregated to obtain a measure of a parent's positive response. Responses 1 (not important) and 2 (slightly important) were combined to get an estimate of a parent's negative response. Response 3 (important) was left alone. The full 5-point scale data are in Tables 3 (Results by choice theories and factors) and 4 (Rank ordering of results) in Appendix E. Presenting the data in this way provides a vivid indication of the degree of importance parents attached to each factor.

This section presents the data in two ways. 5.2.1 deals with the results by choice theories and factors, and section 5.2.2 presents the items by rank order.

5.2.1 RESULTS BY CHOICE THEORIES AND FACTORS

The table reveals that parents chose Catholic schools on the basis of a complex pattern of interacting factors rather than on one or two isolated factors. The factors which were given high ratings are consistent with the literature. This will be explained below. The full rated data are presented in Table 3 Appendix E.

Table 5.1: Results by choice theories and factors (n= 612 parents)

FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%
Instrumental Academic Value			
The high academic standards of the school (Q19)	3.6	12.7	83.7
Good examination results (Q24)	2.6	11.2	86.2
The curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of my child (Q25)	3.5	19.2	77.4
The school makes its pupils work hard academically in the school (Q26)	2.6	16.6	80.7
Quality of Education			
The school strives for all-round individual development of my child (Q18)	2.8	12.8	84.4
The impressive wide range of extracurricular facilities (Q20)	9.7	33.2	57.1
The cultural life of the school (Q21)	11.2	32.4	56.4
The sporting life of the school (Q22)	15.0	37.7	47.3
The small classes of the school (Q38)	5.8	14.9	79.3
The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	2.0	11.2	86.8
Teacher Quality			
The dedication of teachers (Q36)	3.3	10.9	85.8
The qualification of teachers (Q37)	3.5	14.0	82.5
The standard of teaching in the school compared with other schools (Q39)	7.7	16.0	76.3

Table 5.1: Results by choice theories and factors (n= 612 parents) continued

FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%
The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn (Q41)	3.1	13.6	83.3
The school has a principal who is effective (Q42)	4.4	17.5	78.1
Usually the school has good pupil-teacher relationships (Q43)	4.0	19.9	76.1
Intrinsic- Personal/ Social Value			
The school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance (Q31)	3.6	12.5	83.9
The school has a safe environment (Q32)	6.2	11.7	82.1
The school's attitude to parents is impressive(Q33)	23.5	22.4	54.1
My child (ren)'s friends attended (Q34)	53.4	18.6	28.0
Community Dimension			
The school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others (Q8)	2.5	19.2	78.1
The sense of caring community which children experience there (Q9)	4.0	15.9	80.1
The values of community and tolerance are taught (Q10)	2.7	12.0	85.3
The pastoral care provided by the school (Q12)	12.1	23.6	64.2
A friendly atmosphere with a racial mix (Q13)	11.0	16.5	72.5
Social Capital			
The social relationships and experiences provided by the school (Q11)	4.0	24.2	71.8
The social standing, or prestige, of the school (Q14)	25.0	27.9	47.1
The children who went there are the kind of children I want my child (ren) to mix with (Q16)	26.9	22.6	50.5
Social Class			
The reputation of the school (Q15)	9.7	20.6	69.7
An international mix of students (Q17)	25.1	24.0	50.9
Reasonable school fees (Q29)	24.8	23.1	52.2
The school was conveniently accessible (Q30)	20.5	22.1	57.4
Economic Factors			
The senior children are prepared well for University or tertiary Education (Q27)	4.4	17.1	78.5
Many will be able to get a job on leaving school (Q28)	23.5	23.5	53.0

Table 5.1: Results by choice theories and factors (n= 612 parents) continued

FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%
Religious Nature			
The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	4.6	10.7	84.7
The religious education programme offered by the school (Q44)	17.1	18.2	64.7
The way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God (Q45)	15.4	15.6	69.0
The school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus (Q46)	14.7	15.7	69.6
The presence of some religious (Sisters, Brothers or Priests) on the staff (Q47)	42.9	20.0	37.0
My child (ren) will come to appreciate their Catholic faith tradition (Q48)	38.3	14.1	47.5
Previous Experience			
Previous experience of a Catholic school (Q35)	47.7	20.1	32.1

5.2.1.1 Instrumental academic value

Table 5.1 shows a factor of four items that reflect the instrumental academic value and emphasises a clear message implied by parents' responses, that academic values are very important. Of the four items within the instrumental academic values, parents have scored highly in three of them: 'the academic standards of the school' (83.7%), 'good examination results' (86.2%) and 'the school makes its pupils work hard academically' (80.7%). The high score of these factors suggests that academic values appear to be a priority when it comes to choosing a school. The 'curriculum offered by the school' in general is an essential aspect to achieving high academic standards and thus also scored fairly high (77.4 %), indicating that this is also of importance to parents.

Within these categories, 58% of parents considered 'good examination results' as *"extremely important"* (see Table 5, Appendix E). This rating was higher than 'academic standard of the school' (55.0%), the 'curriculum' (46.1%) and 'hard work' (46.0%).

5.2.1.2 Quality of education

Of the six factors reflecting the 'quality of education', parents attributed a high score to 'an all round individual development' (84.4%), 'small classes of the school' (79.3%) and 'standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school' (86.8%). This suggests that parents believe that in order to achieve high academic standards and good examination results, there must be mechanisms in place such as discipline and small class size.

The high rating of the factor 'standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school' suggests that parents expect an orderly, disciplined school, where learning can go forward unimpeded. They believe that good examination results are possible when the school endeavours to create an appropriate learning climate. This tends to concur with Squelch and Lemmer's (1994) claim that "effective discipline is also associated with high academic and in academic achievements" (p.41). In addition, parents attached importance to class size of the school. As one of the parents commented: "My child thrives in the class environment which is small enough for individual attention by the teacher but big enough for social interaction in a warm manner, which encourages basic respect for all". Peterson (2003) also argues that students perform better in small classes.

Although the extra curriculum activities are embedded in 'all round-individual development', parents have shown that they are less interested in these factors, hence the lower importance attributed to these. The 'impressive wide range of extracurricular facilities' was rated very important by 57.1% of parents. The 'cultural' and 'sporting' life of the school were rated 56.4% and 47.3% respectively.

5.2.1.3 Teacher quality

All six of these factors received "very important" rating by over 75% of parents. The most highly rated items were the 'dedication of teachers' (85.8%), the 'qualification of teacher' (82.5%) and the 'classroom ethos' (83.3%). This suggests an awareness of the centrality of the classroom and the teacher. Backing this is also the recognition of the role of the principal (78.1% said an effective principal was very important). Parents have

realised that if their children are to achieve a good education, including good examination results, an effective principal is crucial and the quality of teachers has to be of a high standard.

5.2.1.4 Intrinsic- personal/ social value

Of the four factors reflecting the intrinsic-personal/social value, parents attributed high scores to the factors 'the school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance' (83.9%) and 'the school has a safe environment' (82.1 %). The 5-point scale reinforces these results. 60.4% of parents saw school safety as *'extremely important'* and 57.7% said individual respect was *'extremely important'*. Table 5.1 indicates that parents are less interested in 'the school's attitude to parents'; only 54.1% considered this very important. The parents also did not consider "my friends' children attended" enough reason for choosing the school; 53.4% of the respondents did not consider this to be important. This suggests that parents consider the child's happiness, which results from the respect he or she receives from the school and a safe school environment, as more important than whom he or she attends school with.

5.2.1.5 Community dimension

Consistent with the premium placed on respect for learners, parents also rated general community values highly. 85.3% rated 'values of community and tolerance are taught' as very important; 80.1% said the same for 'caring community' and likewise 78.1% saw 'the school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others' as very important. However, less than 50% of parents rated these items as *'extremely important'* (Table 4 Appendix E), which suggests that the academic, teaching and learning aspects have a higher priority for them.

Surprisingly 'the pastoral care provided by the school' was not considered so important. Only 64.2% of the respondents considered this factor very important. This implies that for the parents, a sense of belonging which children experience at school is more important than the pastoral care.

5.2.1.6 Social capital

Table 5.1 indicates that the parents attributed less importance to the factors, 'the social standing, or prestige, of the school' and 'the children who went there are the kind of children I want my child (ren) to mix with'. This is evident from the low rating of the two factors. Only 47.1% and 50.5% of the respondents respectively indicated that these factors were very important. Instead parents indicated a concern for the social development of their children. This is indicated by the importance parents attached to 'the social relationships and experiences provided by the school'. The parents attributed a fairly high score to this factor (71.8%).

5.2.1.7 Social class

The table also indicates that the parents attributed less importance to their social class position. This is evident from the low rating of the factors such as 'the reputation of the school' (69.7%), 'an international mix of students' (50.9%) and 'reasonable school fees' (52.2%) as well as 'accessibility of the school' (57.4%). The low score attributed to these factors demonstrates that for parents in this study social class position has little to do with school choice.

5.2.2.8 Economic factors

From the table it is evident that the economic factor is important in school choice. 78.5% of parents indicated that 'the senior children are prepared well for university or tertiary education' was very important. Only 4.4% said that this was not important. Parents are aware that a high school certificate is not enough for obtaining a good job, therefore they want their children to be fully educated for employment and they expect their chosen school to prepare their children for university or tertiary education to enable them to obtain employment. This might be the reason why they attributed a low score to the factor, 'many will be able to get a job on leaving school' (53.0%).

5.2.1.9 Religious factors

Being Catholic schools it would have been expected that religious values would have been highly rated. However, Table 5.1 reveals that what parents want is a school which

supports the moral values taught at home and not necessarily the religious components of the school. For this reason, parents put the factor 'the moral values taught in my home are supported by the school' (84.7%) well before the 'religious education programme offered by the school' (64.7%), 'the school assists the child to grow in faith in God' (69.0%), or 'the school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus' (69.6%). Significantly the item 'the moral values taught in my home are supported by the school' was rated *'extremely important'* by 67.0% of parents- the highest rating in this category (see Table 3, Appendix E).

Consistently, the table also indicates that parents do not see the presence of religious teachers to be essential to the religious nature of a Catholic school and rated this very low on the list. Only 37% of the respondents considered this very important while 42.9% indicated that the presence of religious teachers was not important. This is not surprising because only 34% of the respondents attended Catholic schools themselves while 24% of the respondents had a spouse or partner who attended one (see Appendix D). Parents also attributed a low score to the factor, 'my child (ren) will come to appreciate their Catholic faith tradition' (47.5%).

5.2.1.10 Previous experience

Table 5.1 also reveals that parents' previous experience of Catholic schools was not a significant factor. This factor received a low score of 32.1%. This was contrary to Western and Carpenter's finding as referred to in Flynn (1993). These authors maintain that parents who attended Catholic schools are likely to choose them for their children.

5.2.1.11 Summary

The analysis shows that parental choice is a complex process; it involves a pattern of interacting factors. However, parents were very consistent in their responses to the values and qualities they look for in a school. The instrumental academic value theory was identified in the analysis. The parents wanted high academic standard and good examination results. In addition they wanted quality of education which includes all-round individual development of their children, teacher quality and classroom ethos.

They also wanted moral values and not religious values. Parents were aware that Catholic education possesses this educational quality (see Chapter 2). Parents also believe that to achieve a high academic standard and good examination results there must be mechanisms in place for this; therefore they attributed high scores to teacher quality factors such as dedication and qualification of teachers as well as classroom work ethos and discipline.

Another theory that can be identified in this analysis is the 'intrinsic-personal/social value theory'. In addition to academic values, parents want social development of their children; for this sense they attributed importance to social relationships, a friendly atmosphere, small classes and community values. Parents also want moral development of their children as well as safety, which they consider extremely important, as well as respect for individual children.

These results may be different when they are analysed in rank order and by schools.

5.2.2 RANK ORDERING OF RESULTS

Table 5.2 shows the rank ordering of the results. Arranging the results in rank order provides a picture of what the motivating factors really are of parental choice of Catholic schools. The ranking is done in groups of items which produced recognisable sets of priorities. These are academic standards; the values of individual and communal respect; school quality; school organisation; religious factors; extra-curriculum activities and social factors, and religious factors, sporting and social class values. The full 5-point rank data are in Table 4 Appendix E.

Although the responses produced a ranking as seen in the table, it should be noted that the gap between the top ranked item (the standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school, 86.8%) and item 13 (the sense of caring community which children experience there, 80.1%) is very small, which means that it is the combination of items that is important. Secondly, as can be seen, the bottom ranked groups of items 'extra-curriculum activities and social factors' and 'Catholic religious factors, sporting and

social class values' are very important only in the ranges of 28.0% - 57.4%. The gap here between the lowest ranked item 41 (my child (ren)'s friends attended, 28%), and item 28 (the school was conveniently accessible, 57.4%) was much larger than for the top items, which indicates stronger preferences, or lack of them. The different categories are discussed below.

Table 5.2: Rank ordering of results

Rank	FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools		
		Not Important	Important	Very Important
		%	%	%
	Academic standards			
1	The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	2.0	11.2	86.8
2	Good examination results (Q24)	2.6	11.2	86.2
3	The dedication of teachers (Q36)	3.3	10.9	85.8
4	The high academic standards of the school (Q19)	3.6	12.7	83.7
	Values: individual and communal respect			
5	The values of community and tolerance are taught (Q10)	2.7	12.0	85.3
6	The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	4.6	10.7	84.7
7	The school strives for all-round individual development of my child (Q18)	2.8	12.8	84.4
8	The school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance (Q31)	3.6	12.5	83.9
	School quality			
9	The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn (Q41)	3.1	13.6	83.3
10	The qualification of teachers (Q37)	3.5	14.0	82.5
11	The school has a safe environment (Q32)	6.2	11.7	82.1
12	The school makes its pupils work hard academically in the school (Q26)	2.6	16.6	80.7
13	The sense of caring community which children experience there (Q9)	4.0	15.9	80.1
14	The small classes of the school (Q38)	5.8	14.9	79.3

Table 5.2: Rank ordering of results continued

Rank	FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools		
		Not Important	Important	Very Important
		%	%	%
15	The senior children are prepared well for University or tertiary Education (Q27)	4.4	17.1	78.5
	School organisation			
16	The school has a principal who is effective (42)	4.4	17.5	78.1
16	The school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others (Q8)	2.5	19.2	78.1
18	The curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of my child (Q25)	3.5	19.2	77.4
19	The standard of teaching in the school compared with other schools (Q39)	7.7	16.0	76.3
20	Usually the school has good pupil-teacher relationships (43)	4.0	19.9	76.1
21	A friendly atmosphere with a racial mix (Q13)	11.0	16.5	72.5
22	The social relationships and experiences provided by the school (Q11)	4.0	24.2	71.8
	Religious factors			
23	The reputation of the school (Q15)	9.7	20.6	69.7
24	The school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus (Q46)	14.7	15.7	69.6
25	The way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God (Q45)	15.4	15.6	69.0
26	The religious education programme offered by the school (Q44)	17.1	18.2	64.7
27	The pastoral care provided by the school (Q12)	12.1	23.6	64.2
	Extra-curriculum activities and social factors			
28	The school was conveniently accessible (Q30)	20.5	22.1	57.4
29	The impressive wide range of extracurricular facilities (Q20)	9.7	33.2	57.1
30	The cultural life of the school (Q21)	11.2	32.4	56.4
31	The school's attitude to parents is impressive(Q33)	23.5	22.4	54.1
32	Many will be able to get a job on leaving school (Q28)	23.5	23.5	53.0
33	Reasonable school fees (Q29)	24.8	23.1	52.2
34	An international mix of students (Q17)	25.1	24.0	50.9
35	The children who went there are the kind of children I want my child (ren) to mix with (Q16)	26.9	22.6	50.5

Table 5.2: Rank ordering of results continued

Rank	FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools		
		Not Important	Important	Very Important
		%	%	%
	Catholic religious factors, sporting and social class values			
36	My child (ren) will come to appreciate their Catholic faith tradition (Q48)	38.3	14.1	47.5
37	The sporting life of the school (Q22)	15.0	37.7	47.3
38	The social standing, or prestige, of the school (Q14)	25.0	27.9	47.1
39	The presence of some religious (Sisters, Brothers or Priests)on the staff (Q47)	42.9	20.0	37.0
40	Previous experience of a Catholic school (Q35)	47.7	20.1	32.1
41	My child (ren)'s friends attended (Q34)	53.4	18.6	28.0

(These ranks are based on the combined scores of very and extremely important, see Table 4, Appendix E).

5.2.2.1 Academic standards

Parents' first reason for choosing Catholic schools for their children appears to be related to the expectation that these schools will provide high academic standards. There are four items within this group and the gap between the first item (standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school, 86.8%) and the forth item (the high academic standards of the school, 83.7%) is insignificant. The full ranked results in Table 4 Appendix E also show very small differences between the four items. The full ranked results indicate that the respondents rated the top item 'standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school' (56.7%), the second item 'good examination results' (58%), the third item 'the dedication of teachers' (54%) and the forth item 'the high academic standards of the school' (55%) as *'extremely important'*. Although the factor 'good examination results' was rated slightly higher than the two other items in the full ranked table, the results show that the parents attributed equal importance to the four items.

These results also concur with Fox's (in Walford, 1996) findings in England and Wales, that "the most frequently voiced criteria for choice were related to the perception that

these schools could produce better academic results and develop character through discipline" (p. 56). Discipline is not only a means for developing character but it is also "associated with high academic and academic achievements" (Squelch and Lemmer, 1998: 40). In this, the parents mirror the expectations of their Australian (Flynn, 1993) and Argentinean (Potter and Hayden, 2004) counterparts. In Flynn's study, parents ranked 'standard of discipline and behaviour' 7th out of 21 and scored 90%; in Argentina, parents ranked discipline and examination results 4th and 6th respectively within the top 15 factors.

Parents believe that high academic standards are achieved not only by maintaining high standards of discipline and order in the school but also by the dedication of the teaching staff; therefore they ranked this factor within the academic group, in keeping yet again with the Australian findings (Flynn, 1993). Australian parents ranked 'dedication of teachers' 3rd and scored 92%. The ranking position of the 'dedication of teachers' suggests that both the parents in this study and Australian parents attach a similar importance to the dedication of teachers.

5.2.2.2 Values: individual and communal respect

Parents' second group of reasons for choosing Catholic schools is related to values, both individual and communal. They expect that Catholic schools will be able to impart these important values to their children. The gap between the top ranked item within this group (the values of community and tolerance are taught, 85.3%) and the last item (the school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance, 83.9%) is very insignificant, as in the first group. The differences in importance come when we look at the results from the full ranked results in Table 4, Appendix E.

The full ranked results show that 67.0% of parents thought that the item 'the moral values taught in my home are supported by the school' was '*extremely important*'. This was considerably higher than the other items. It seems from this that a key factor is that parents choose Catholic schools because they are convinced that the school will support 'the moral values taught at home' (see Flynn, 1993: 403). This factor was ranked fifth by

the Australian parents and scored 92% (Flynn, 1993). As Saulwick et al. (1998) indicate, parents want a school that does not conflict with their values.

The factor 'the values of community and tolerance are taught' received the lowest score (45.7%) in the full ranked results in this category but it is a very important factor for parents in South Africa, hence it was ranked first (85.3%) within the category of values in Table 5.2. Neither the Argentinean parents nor the Australian parents included 'the values of community and tolerance' in their top factors. This implies that for the parents in this study community values are considered a very important factor in their decision, and this makes them different from their counterparts. This is not surprising because, judging from the history of South Africa, the values of community and tolerance were lacking, and parents consider these crucial if South Africa needs to move forward. Therefore they choose schools where community values form part of their culture (see Chapter 2).

Furthermore, it appears that by valuing the factor 'community values and tolerance' parents believe that "the community of families which comprise religiously-based schools produce a rich social capital, which results in better academic performance" (Coleman and Hoffer in O'Keeffe, 1998: 42).

In addition, parents attributed a high score of 84.4% to the factor 'the school strives for all-round individual development of my child' and in the full ranked results scored 53.7% for *'extremely important'*, higher than the factor 'the values of community and tolerance are taught' (45.7%) This suggests that parents expect the school to develop in the children not only community and moral values but also for the school to promote the full personal development of students. Parents also ranked the factor 'the school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance' fourth in the group and scored 57.7% for *'extremely important* in the full ranked results. This again suggests that for parents academic achievement is not the only important goal. They expect that the school will recognise an individual child's character and gift and their uniqueness.

5.2.2.3 School quality

Table 5.2 shows that the third priority of parents relates to school quality. There are seven items within this category and like the two previous categories, the gap between the top item within this group (the classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn, 83.3%) and the last item within the group (the senior children are prepared well for University or tertiary Education 78.5%) is very small. This indicates the importance parents attached to this combination of factors.

For parents, school quality means a 'classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn' supported by the values of hard work, sense of community and a safe environment. Interestingly, the item which was most highly rated as "extremely important" was school safety (60.4%). From this it is clear that parents expect the school to nurture their child with care and allow their child to develop as a well rounded human being; as well as enabling them to perform.

5.2.2.4 School organisation

Table 5.2 reveals that school organisation is also important. The scores attributed to the nine items within this category were lower than the previous categories, but all were rated as very important by over 70% of parents. Again, the gap between the items in this category is only 5%. Therefore from Table 5.2, it is seen that parents attributed a similar importance to all the items within this group. The first item within this group (the small classes of the school, 79.3%) and the last item in the group (the social relationships and experiences provided by the school, 71.8%) have only 7.5% difference. However, item 16 which is the third item in the group 'the school has a principal who is effective' (78.1%) scored the most in the extremely important categories (54.9%) (see Table 5, Appendix E). Parents believe that an effective principal is "essential if their children are to received the best education at school" (Flynn, 1993:140). This supports Squelch and Lemmer's (1994) claim that an effective school leader is essential to make "schools more effective and successful in order to improve the quality of learning for pupils" (p. 11). In addition, parents consider the class size of the school crucial, and in line with their Australian and

Argentinean counterparts, attribute importance to the factor 'the small classes of the school' and scored 49.1% on *'extremely important'* categories, second to the effective principal (54.9%) (see Table 4, Appendix E).

Parents also consider the factors, 'the curriculum offered by the school' (77.4%), 'standard of teaching in the school' (76.3%), and 'good pupil-teacher relationships' (76.1%) as very important aspects of the school organisation. Furthermore, parents have realised that good school organisation can help students develop academically and socially. They have indicated that their children "can only achieve a sense of personal identity in the context of their society" (O'Keeffe, 1998:37) and 78.1% ranked the expectation that Catholic schools 'encourage learners to be concerned for the needs of others' as very important. 42.4% considered this item to be '*extremely important*' (see Table 4, Appendix E). This factor, in combination with 'a friendly atmosphere with racial mix' (72.5%) and 'the social relationships and experiences provided by the school' (71.8%) suggests that parents consider the combination of these social factors provided by the school a very important aspect in the organisation of the school. This concurs with Viktor Frank (in O'Keeffe, 1998) who claims that human beings are constituted by meaning and relationships. O'Keeffe indicates that "human persons find fulfilment and meaning to the extent that they are open to self-transcendence in relationships with others" (p.37). Parents believe that Catholic schools are capable of developing their children socially.

5.2.2.5 Religious factors

These factors were in the 60 – 70% range of great importance, and parents attributed equal importance to the first three items within this category. They also attributed equal importance to the last two items. Though the difference between the first three items and the last two is small, parents have shown preference for the factors 'the reputation of the school' (69.7%), 'the school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus' (69.7%) and 'the way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God' (69%) compared with the factors 'the religious programme offered by the school' (64.7%) and 'the pastoral care provided by the school' (64.2%).

Though parents indicate that factors in this category are important, the gap between the overall top ranked item from the first category 'the standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school' (86.8%) and the last item in this group 'the pastoral care provided by the school' (64.2%) is large, which suggests that parents attribute less importance to the religious nature of the school.

In addition, judging the scores from the full ranked results, these items received low scores. No item scored more than 40% as being extremely important (see Table 4, Appendix E). This finding is the opposite of the Flynn's (1993) study in Australia. For Australian parents, the religious aspect of the school was very important. These items 'the school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus', and 'the way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God' had equal scores (76 %) for being important in Flynn's study.

5.2.2.6 Extra-curriculum activities and social factors

From Table 5.2, it is evident that parents attach little importance to this category. The eight items within this category ranged between 50 and 60%. Parents have shown that extracurricular activities have little importance in their choice of Catholic schools. The factors 'the impressive wide range of extracurricular facilities' and 'the cultural life of the school' were attributed 57.1% and 56.4% respectively. The accessibility of the school scored slightly higher (57.4%) than the cultural life of the school. From the full ranked results only 20 – 30% of the parents consider the items in this group extremely important (Table 4, Appendix E).

The low score for the extra curriculum activities is in line with Flynn's study (1993). The parents in his study also rated the factor, 'extra curriculum activities' very low (43%). This shows that for parents in this study and Australia, extra-curriculum activities of the school, do not influence their choice of Catholic schools. By contrast, for Potter and Hayden's study (2004) in Argentina, parents considered the extra curriculum activities very important and ranked them in the top 15 factors.

5.2.2.7 Catholic religious factors, sporting and social class values

The low ranking and rating of this group is a clear indication that parents attribute less importance to the Catholic religious factors, such as 'my child (ren) will come to appreciate their Catholic faith tradition'(47%), 'the presence of some religious (Sisters, Brothers or Priests) on the staff' (37.%) and 'previous experience of a Catholic school' (32.1%). It is surprising to notice that 'the presence of some religious personnel (Sisters, Brothers or Priests) on the staff' was ranked very low. Parents do not see these factors as being integral or essential, to a Catholic school. This picture reflects very closely Flynn's findings in his Australian survey where he notes the decline in religious attitudes. Though this ranking reveals that parents show little or a lack of interest in Catholic religious factors, they demonstrate clearly that the factors 'the sporting life of the school' (47.3%), 'previous experience of a Catholic school' 32.1%) and 'my child (ren)'s friends attended' (28%) are similarly not enough reasons for parental choice of Catholic schools. The evidence is more fully shown in the full ranked results (see Table 4, Appendix E).

5.2.2.8 Summary

The results reveal that parents base their choice of Catholic schools on a combination of factors. Parents demonstrate stronger preferences for the first category (academic standard) through to the fourth category (school organisation). They indicate that the academic standards of the school have great influence on their choice. They value the factors such as disciplinary climate, good examination results and dedication of teachers. This is because choosing a school with a high level of attainment may increase the likelihood of their children's success.

Parents also show that the extent to which the schools embraced values contribute to their choice of Catholic schools. These values related to individual and communal respect such as community values and tolerance, moral development, all-round individual development and respect for all. From the results, it was evident that parents consider these factors very important but the full ranked results shows that the factor 'the moral values taught in my home are supported by the school' was the most important factor

influencing parental choice. Parents believe that academic achievement is not the only goal; therefore they want the schools to focus on values, morality and ethics. They want their children to be all-rounders, and happy. They want them to be treated as individuals and their education to support their views at home. In addition, parents want their children to be treated as special people, to be listened to, and treated with respect. Furthermore, as South Africans, they uphold values of community and tolerance and they want these inculcated in their children and believe Catholic schools are likely to do this.

The results also reveal that school quality is another factor influencing parental choice of Catholic schools. This quality related to high academic standard, classroom work ethos, teacher quality which is measured by qualification, safe environment, and the extent to which schools make students work academically. Again, from the full ranked results, parents demonstrated their strong preferences for the factors 'the school has a safe environment', 'high academic standard' and 'classroom work ethos'. Parents also believe that the sense of caring community which students experience in the school enhances the quality of the school.

In addition, parents based their choice of Catholic schools on school organisation in relation to smaller class sizes, which give individual attention and better teaching, and which prepare students for further studies; and the effectiveness of the principal.
Furthermore, parents in South Africa value social integration and believe Catholic schools have the platform for individual development, not only academic but also social.

Perhaps surprisingly, although parents indicated that the religious aspect of the school was important, the values discussed above had greater influence on their choice of Catholic schools than did the religious aspect of the schools. They also indicated through their responses that extracurricular activities, and social factors, as well as Catholic religious factors and social class values had little influence on them.

These results may be different when they are analysed by schools because of the different character of the schools. This is discussed below

5.3 RESULTS BY SCHOOLS

This section is about the analysis of results by schools. The main categories of comparison used here are class, race and gender. As indicated previously, the five secondary schools involved in this study consist of different social-class schools. Schools 1, 2 and 3 are upper-middle class schools; School 4 is a working class school and School 5, a lower middle/ working class school. The table below shows parental occupation by school.

Table 5.3: Occupation by School (%)

Professional and managerial occupations	School 1 (n = 112)	School 2 (n = 94)	School 3 (n = 116)	School 4 (n = 108)	School 5 (n = 122)
Professional	17.0	25.5	46.6	1.9	8.2
Semi-professional	22.3	21.3	28.4	20.4	30.3
Associate Professions	7.1	3.2	0.9	0.0	4.1
Directors	8.9	6.4	4.3	0.9	0.0
Managers	20.5	18.1	6.9	5.6	9.8
Total	**75.8**	**74.5**	**87.1**	**28.8**	**52.4**
Skilled and semi-skilled occupations					
Technicians	1.8	2.1	0.0	10.2	0.8
Clerks	9.8	4.2	6.0	2.8	3.3
Service Workers	2.7	0.0	0.0	8.3	13.9
Skilled Agricultural Workers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Craft and Trade Workers	0.9	0.0	0.0	8.3	4.1
Machine Operators	0.0	1.1	0.0	3.7	3.3
Elementary Occupations	1.8	0.0	0.0	12.0	2.5
Armed Forces	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
Unemployed	2.7	2.1	0.9	10.2	4.1
House-wife	4.5	16.0	6.0	15.7	14.8
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

(see Table 4, Appendix F for details and occupation classification)

As can be seen, Schools 1, 2 and 3 can be called middle-class schools because the majority of the parents are from professional and managerial class occupation. Schools 4

and 5 on the other hand have fewer parents who come from professional and managerial occupation..

Schools 3, 4 and 5 are all girls' schools and School 3 in addition has only white learners despite efforts to attract other races (see Chapter 2). At School 4, there is no distinction between Coloured and African learners; all are regarded as "black". Table 5.3.2 shows the racial distribution in the individual schools:

Table 5.4: Racial distribution in individual schools

Population group	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Black	87	32.7					420	100.0	175	60.3
Coloured	119	44.7	10	5.7					105	36.2
Asian	13	4.9							2	0.7
White	47	17.7	165	94.3	414	100.0			8	2.8
Total	**266**	**100.0**	**175**	**100.0**	**414**	**100.0**	**420**	**100.0**	**290**	**100.0**

(Source: Catholic Institute of Education, 2004)

Coming from different socio-economic and racial backgrounds, it is likely that the responses will be different because according to Gewirtz *et al.* (1995), different parents will react to the same schools differently, "partly because the very aspects which repel some attract others and partly because the interpretations of atmosphere differ in themselves" (p. 31). To this effect, Gewirtz *et al.* stress that choice is oriented to and informed by class thinking. For Gewirtz *et al.*, social class groups interpret schools in different ways. "What they 'see' and 'know' of school is different and is related to different systems of values and relevance" (p. 38).

The results are grouped into the same choice theory and factor categories used before and these are discussed below.

5.3.1 Instrumental academic value

Table 5.5 shows a closer examination of factors that reflect the academic dimension of schools and indicates that the academic dimension of the school is very important particularly to parents from Schools 2, 4 and 5. School 2 is a middle-class and

predominantly white school, while Schools 4 and 5 are working-class and black schools. These three schools attributed high scores to the factors 'the high academic standards of the schools' and 'good examination results'. School 4 rated the factor 'good examination results' extremely highly (94.5%). However, School 2 seems to be a unique school; parents from this school scored highly in all the four items within the academic category. Schools 1 and 3 are also middle-class and attributed fairly high scores to the items within this category. School 1 attributed equal importance to the factors 'the high academic standards of the schools' (78.7%) and 'good examination results' (78.7%).

Table 5.5: Instrumental Academic Value (N = 602 Parents)

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The high academic standards of the school (Q19)	6.3	15.0	78.7	0.0	5.0	95.0	2.6	20.7	76.7	2.4	11.1	86.5	5.8	10.9	83.3
Good examination results (Q24)	6.3	15.0	78.7	0.0	8.0	92.0	1.7	19.8	78.4	1.6	3.9	94.5	2.9	9.5	87.6
The curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of my child (Q25)	2.4	12.6	85.0	3.0	9.1	87.9	6.1	25.4	68.4	1.6	22.8	75.6	4.3	23.9	71.7
The school makes its pupils work hard academically in the school (Q26)	5.6	16.7	77.8	2.0	5.1	92.9	3.4	22.4	74.1	0.0	18.0	82.0	2.2	18.8	79.0

The responses given by both middle and working-class parents contradict what Woods *et al.* (1998) suggest when they stated that middle-class parents are likely to be more concerned with high academic standards and good examination results than working class parents. The results show that both class of parents are equally concerned with academic standard and good examination results, and that there is little difference between middle-class and working-class parents as far as instrumental academic values are concerned when it comes to choosing a school (see also p.109).

The table also indicates that two middle-class schools (Schools 1 and 2) rated the factor 'the curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of my child' high, (above 85%), but School 3 which is also a middle-class school rated it very low (68.4%). Concern for the curriculum offered by the school is typical of middle-class parents according to the findings of Potter and Hayden's (2004) study. Therefore the low score attributed to this factor by School 3 may be as a result of the nature of the school (all girls' school). The two working-class schools (Schools 4 and 5), which are also all girls' schools, also rated the factor low compared to Schools 1 and 2, which are co-educational schools. This may imply that parents from the all girls' schools are more concerned about how well the schools perform academically and do not bother much about the curriculum offered by the school. This is an essentially instrumental view.

5.3.2 Quality of education

Table 5.6 shows that both the middle-class and the working-class parents rated the factor 'the school strives for all-round individual development of my child' high, though 76.3% of parents from School 5 parents did not rate this as highly as did School 4. For the factor on discipline and behaviour, Schools 1 and 2 (middle-class) and Schools 4 and 5 (working-class) all gave ratings above 85% for 'very important'. This confirms Gewirtz *et al.*'s (1995) claim that both middle-class (privileged/skilled choosers) and working-class (semi-skilled choosers and disconnected choosers) parents look for schools with a strong disciplinary climate.

Table 5.6: Quality Education (N = 602 Parents)

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The school strives for all-round individual development of my child (Q18)	1.6	11.8	86.6	1.0	4.0	95.0	2.6	12.9	84.5	3.1	14.2	82.7	5.0	18.7	76.3
The impressive wide range of extracurricular facilities (Q20)	11.0	31.5	57.5	4.0	14.0	82.0	5.2	52.6	42.2	16.0	32.0	52.0	10.9	33.3	55.8
The cultural life of the school (Q21)	11.8	30.7	57.5	7.1	25.3	67.7	15.8	31.6	52.6	13.4	37.8	48.8	8.0	34.8	57.2
The sporting life of the school (Q22)	14.2	31.5	54.3	12.1	31.3	56.6	7.9	39.5	52.6	26.8	42.5	30.7	13.0	42.0	44.9
The small classes of the school (Q38)	0.8	13.5	85.7	0.0	1.0	99.0	6.1	21.9	71.9	12.6	16.5	70.9	8.0	18.8	73.2
The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	1.6	10.3	88.1	1.0	0.0	99.0	2.6	23.3	74.1	1.6	11.8	86.6	2.9	9.4	87.7

School 2's high score for the factor 'the standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school'(99.0%) indicates a continuation of its tradition. School 2 is an old school moved to a new location. It is known for its disciplinary character and this is a value that parents want.

The slightly low score of this factor by School 3 (74.1%) may be because the school's good academic record intrinsically demands discipline. Overall though the data suggest that parents chose Catholic schools with the expectation that these schools will maintain discipline.

The table also indicates that parents at Schools 1 and 2 rated the factor 'the small classes of the school' highly (above 85%). School 2 in particular attributed extremely highly equal scores to this factor (99.0%). According to Peterson (2003), "reducing class size is an expensive proposition because smaller classes require the recruitment of more teachers, raising the personnel cost at the school" (p. 4), and that it is only the middle-class parents who can afford this The teacher-pupil ratio for School 1 is 1:12 and 1:18 for School 2, and the fee range is R14-18000 per annum.

In addition, the table also indicates that apart from School 2 parents who rated the factor 'the impressive wide range of extracurricular facilities' high (82%), the rest of the Schools rated the factors concerning extracurricular activities low (below 60%). This implies that both middle-class and working-class parents have little interest in extra curriculum activities of the school.

School 3 is again anomalous there with 'only' 72.9% of parents saying that small class size was very important despite the fee being the higher at about R22000 (see Table 2.10). As will be shown, what parents seek from this school is somewhat different from other parents.

5.3.3 Teacher quality

Table 5.7 shows that the rating of items within this grouping follows a similar pattern to that of Table 5.5. Parents of all five Schools attributed high scores to the factors 'the dedication of teachers', and 'the qualification of teachers'. Again, Schools 1 and 2, the co-educational middle-class schools, proved to be quite similar, with over 80% of parents rating all the items as 'very important'-. Interestingly, it was only these schools that saw 'the standard of teaching in the school compared with other schools' as being very important (87.3% and 89.0% respectively). This suggests either a class consciousness, (which does not appear to be so, see sections 5.3.6 and 5.3.7) or a particular view of teaching.

Apart from School 3 (61.4%), 'an effective principal' was seen to be very important by most parents.

The importance attached to the teacher quality factor was also reflected in Flynn's (1993) study in Australia. Parents in this study, like their Australian counterparts, have recognised that caring principal and competent teachers have an effect on academic standards and quality of education. They have realised that teachers can make a difference in academic performance. The results from Table 5.7 also show that both middle-class and working-class parents consider the dedication and qualification of teachers very important.

Table 5.7: Teacher Quality

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The dedication of teachers (Q36)	4.8	11.1	84.1	1.0	3.0	96.0	4.4	12.3	83.3	1.6	12.6	85.8	4.3	13.8	81.9
The qualification of teachers (Q37)	5.6	11.1	83.3	1.0	5.1	93.9	2.6	19.8	77.6	2.4	19.7	78.0	5.1	13.1	81.8
The standard of teaching in the school compared with other schools (Q39)	3.2	9.5	87.3	8.0	3.0	89.0	1.7	30.2	68.1	17.3	19.7	63.0	8.0	15.9	76.1
The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn (Q41)	1.6	15.1	83.3	1.0	1.0	98.0	7.0	20.2	72.8	2.4	12.7	84.9	3.6	16.7	79.7
The school has a principal who is effective (Q42)	4.0	17.5	87.0	4.0	9.0	87.0	1.7	19.0	79.3	8.7	29.9	61.4	3.6	10.9	85.5
Usually the school has good pupil-teacher relationships (Q43)	2.4	18.3	79.4	3.0	8.0	89.0	2.6	26.7	79.3	8.7	28.3	66.9	6.5	16.7	76.8

5.3.4 Intrinsic-personal/social values

Table 5.8 lists the items within this grouping. Of the four items listed, only one was rated highly by all five schools. Parents expect schools to respect 'each learner irrespective of ability or appearance' (76-94%). Schools 3 and 4 rated the factor 'the school has a safe environment' low. These are two different schools, a middle-class all white school and a working-class all black school. Rating this factor low may mean that as girls' schools parents expect that there will automatically be a mechanism for safety in the school, and in the case for School 3, parents will not pay high fees (R22 720) without there being a safe environment for their children. Therefore the low rating does not necessarily mean that they were not interested but it might mean that it is already implied that the school has a safe environment.

However for School 4, it is hard to believe that they rated the factor 'the school has a safe environment' low (70.3%), because parents complained of lack of safe environment at the school. Some of the respondents from School 4 appealed to the school authorities to "relocate the school to safety", because "the area in which the school is located is very risky for the kids". According to Gewirtz *et al.*, (1995), the working-class parents are strongly inclined to engage with the school choice but have limited capacity to engage 'effectively' with it. They do not have the appropriate skills to exploit it to their children's advantage. The low rating of this factor by School 4 suggests that parents made the choice without being properly informed. In addition, all parents from the five schools rated the factors 'the school's attitude to parents is impressive' (43-60%) and 'my child (ren)'s friend attended' (25-42%) very low, indicating that these factors were of less importance to them.

Table 5.8: Intrinsic-personal/Social value

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance (Q31)	3.1	8.7	88.2	1.0	5.0	94.0	3.5	18.3	78.3	3.1	12.6	84.3	6.5	16.7	76.8
The school has a safe environment (Q32)	1.6	6.3	92.1	0.0	5.0	95.0	4.3	25.9	69.8	16.4	13.3	70.3	7.2	8.0	84.8
The school's attitude to parents is impressive(Q33)	17.5	22.2	60.3	28.0	29.0	43.0	17.5	30.7	51.8	31.7	14.3	54.0	23.2	18.1	58.7
My child (ren)'s friends attended (Q34)	58.1	16.1	25.8	45.5	17.2	37.4	77.2	14.0	8.8	41.3	17.5	41.3	46.3	26.9	26.9

However, the low scores for the factor 'my child (ren)'s friend attended' by the working-class schools (School 4 (41.3%) and School 5 (26.9%)) contradict Woods *et al.*'s (1995) claim that working-class parents consider important the fact that their child (ren)'s friends will be in the school. The responses in Table 5.8 suggest that parents were more concerned about the respect their children receive from the school and not whether their friends will be there. Again therefore there are fewer class differences than would be predicted.

5.3.5 Community dimension

Table 5.9 lists the factors reflecting the community dimension of the school. Responses for this category like the previous responses reflect the different character of each school. Parents from the middle-class schools (Schools 1, 2 and 3) rated the factors 'the school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others' (78-96%), 'the sense of caring community which children experience there' (81-99%) and 'the values of community and tolerance are taught' (84-98%) high, while those from the working-class schools (Schools 4 and 5) rated them low (65-71%). This may suggest that the middle-class parents expect the Catholic schools to offer something beyond the academic values and that the community values such as those items rated above are the kind they expect. On the other hand, the low rating of the items concerning community values by the working-class parents may suggest that the community values were not part of their expectations. It is likely that the parents did not expect the Catholic schools to provide/promote community values apart from academic values. Their responses to Table 5.5 and some factors in Table 5.6 (such as 'the standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school') and in Table 5.7 (dedication and qualification of teachers) are evidence of expecting the schools to provide a high academic standard, and perhaps a sense of using the schools /education to distance themselves from "the community".

Table 5.9: Community Dimension

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others (Q8)	3.1	18.1	78.0	0.0	3.1	96.9	1.8	18.6	79.6	3.1	26.0	70.9	3.6	25.9	70.5
The sense of caring community which children experience there (Q9)	4.7	14.2	81.1	0.0	1.0	99.0	0.9	3.5	95.6	5.5	27.6	66.9	7.2	27.3	65.5
The values of community and tolerance are taught (Q10)	2.4	13.4	84.3	0.0	2.1	97.9	1.8	2.7	95.5	4.0	19.2	76.8	4.3	18.7	77.0
The pastoral care provided by the school (Q12)	22.0	19.7	58.3	4.1	20.6	75.3	22.1	39.8	38.1	6.3	19.0	74.6	5.8	20.3	73.9
A friendly atmosphere with a racial mix (Q13)	8.7	5.5	85.8	28.0	16.0	56.0	2.8	11.9	85.3	7.1	22.2	70.6	10.9	25.5	63.5

The factor 'the pastoral care provided by the school' was not considered an urgent need by all five schools and therefore rated low. However, the factor 'a friendly atmosphere with a racial mix' was considered very important by Schools 1 and 3, a result confirmed by comments from parents. For example a parent from School 1 commented that, "the school seems to be more tolerating of all races and income brackets and we are happy with the racial mix". School 3 parents on the other hand, had a negative comment that, "the school does not reflect the new South Africa; we are yet to see different races in the school". The working-class parents rated this factor low, and School 2 also gave a low rating to it (56%).

The comments from Schools 1 and 3 suggest that parents expect the Catholic schools to create communities where all races can be accommodated and where there is friendly interaction between their children (as seen in School 1) irrespective of race for national building. The two schools rated this factor high (over 85%). The results show that the middle class parents consider the combination of the items within the community dimension factor to be more important, particularly those items they scored more highly than the working class parents.

5.3.6 Social capital

Table 5.10 lists the three factors in the category of social capital and only one factor, 'the social relationships and experiences provided by the school' was considered very important by School 2, and attributed a very high score (93.8%). Schools 1 and 3 attributed fairly high scores of 73.2% and 70.8% respectively. Schools 4 and 5 on the other hand considered all the items in this category to be of little importance and rated them very low. School 2 is an upper middle-class school therefore by rating the factor, 'the social relationships and experiences provided by the school' high, parents from this school expect that the Catholic schools will introduce their children into forming networks in order to create their own social capital (see Ball, 2003: 80). The responses from School 1 and 3 suggest that though they were interested in the social relationships and experiences provided by the school, they prefer forming relationships with different racial groups. The evidence of this was the high response to the factor 'a friendly atmosphere with a racial mix' in Table 5.9.

Table 5.10: Social Capital

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The social relationships and experiences provided by the school (Q11)	3.9	22.8	73.2	0.0	6.2	93.8	1.8	27.4	70.8	7.1	31.5	61.4	5.8	28.8	65.5
The social standing, or prestige, of the school (Q14)	31.5	25.2	43.3	30.0	14.0	56.0	28.1	42.1	29.8	25.6	24.0	50.4	12.2	32.4	55.4
The children who went there are the kind of children I want my child (ren) to mix with (Q16)	24.8	19.2	56.0	35.4	17.2	47.5	6.2	36.3	57.5	43.7	15.1	41.3	24.4	25.2	50.4

The conclusion that can be drawn from Table 5.10 is that for the middle-class parents providing children with social skills was important and that they expect the Catholic schools to introduce their children into social networks by means of social interactions. For the working-class parents, forming social relationships was not as important a factor influencing their choice of Catholic schools.

5.3.7 Social class

In Table 5.11 four factors highlighting social class are listed. The table indicates that it was only the parents from School 2, who responded high to the factor 'the reputation of the school' (81%), and School 5 parents rated this factor fairly high (76.1%). This suggests that both middle-class and working-class parents consider the reputation of the school important when choosing a school (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995). For School 4 parents, the factor, 'the reasonable school fees' (75.6%) was very significant. This confirms Gewirtz *et al.*'s (1995) findings that the low income of working-class (disconnected choosers) plays a major role in decision making. The school fees charged at School 4 are the lowest of all the five schools (R300), (see Table 2.10) and being working-class parents they saw the reasonable school fees as an opportunity to have their children educated in the school. The rest of the schools did not seem to be moved by any of the items in this category.

Table 5.11: Social Class

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The reputation of the school (Q15)	9.4	20.5	70.1	10.0	9.0	81.0	1.7	36.3	62.1	19.7	19.7	60.6	7.2	16.7	76.1
An international mix of students (Q17)	27.0	23.8	49.2	14.1	17.2	68.7	38.0	15.7	46.3	24.4	27.6	48.0	21.9	32.1	46.0
Reasonable school fees (Q29)	23.4	24.2	52.4	44.4	20.2	35.4	31.3	22.6	46.1	3.9	20.5	75.6	25.5	27.0	47.4
The school was conveniently accessible (Q30)	19.7	19.7	60.6	42.0	13.0	45.0	13.8	22.4	63.8	10.3	23.8	65.9	20.6	29.4	50.0

5.3.8 Economic factors

There are two factors in this category as shown in Table 5.12. The respondents from all five schools rated the factor, 'the senior children are prepared well for university or tertiary education' high above the factor 'many will be able to get a job on leaving school'. The high rating of the first item tends to agree with Flynn's (1993) finding in Australia that parents choose schools that they think will enable their children to continue their studies and so get a job. The importance attached to the factor 'the senior children are prepared well for university or tertiary education' by parents from all five schools also concur with the economic theory of choice, which suggests that parents choose schools that will enable their children to become well-educated because "a well educated child is more likely to become financially independent and a happy adult" (Bast and Welberg, 2003: 432).

The response to the factor 'the senior children are prepared well for university or tertiary education' by all parents from the five schools indicates that both middle-class and working-class parents are the same when it comes to school choice for future economic benefit.

Table 5.12: Economic Factors

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The senior children are prepared well for University or tertiary Education (Q27)	8.3	13.3	78.3	4.0	9.1	86.9	2.6	24.3	73.0	3.9	15.7	80.3	3.0	21.5	75.6
Many will be able to get a job on leaving school (Q28)	20.3	24.6	55.1	50.5	12.1	37.4	21.9	31.6	46.5	17.3	18.9	63.8	13.4	28.4	58.2

5.3.9 Religious nature

Table 5.13 shows the "religious nature" of the school as well as the "previous experience of Catholic schools", which item is discussed in section 5.3.10. There are six factors within this grouping. The respondents from all five schools put 'the moral values taught in my home are supported by the school' (82-99%) well before 'the religious education programme offered by the school' (23-83%) or any of the factors listed.

The overwhelming responses from parents of all five schools to the question of moral values (Q23) concurs with Saulwick *et al.*'s (1998) findings in Australia, which suggested that parents want a Christian environment where their children can develop "self-discipline, high self-esteem and moral values" and "to develop into decent kids" (p.7). This was also considered very important by parents in Flynn's (1993) study again in Australia. The message parents are giving here is that the respect for their moral values and belief at home is more important than the religious or spiritual life of the school. The response also indicates that when it comes to moral values, there is no difference between middle-class and working-class as well as black and white; they all desire their moral values to be supported by the school and view the Catholic schools as able to reinforce these values in their children (see Boeffetti, 2001).

The table indicates that not all parents responded highly to the rest of the items in this category. It was only School 2 parents who attributed high scores to the factors 'the religious education programme offered by the school' (82.8%), 'the way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God' (83.8%) and 'the school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus' (84.8%). The high scores given to these factors by School 2 parents is surprising because the school was built on solid religious values and that the religious aspect of the school is part of the culture of the school. In addition, School 2 has a Religious Brother on the staff who takes a strong role in school life.

Table 5.13: Religious and previous Experience

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=126)			School 2 (n=99)			School 3 (n=114)			School 4 (n=126)			School 5 (n=137)		
	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Not Important	Important	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Religious Nature															
The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	0.8	15.0	84.3	0.0	1.0	99.0	3.9	10.5	85.0	3.6	11.0	85.0	3.6	13.8	82.6
The religious education programme offered by the school (Q44)	24.4	9.4	66.1	9.1	8.1	82.8	44.2	32.7	23.0	5.6	22.2	72.2	4.3	18.1	77.5
The way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God (Q45)	22.0	11.8	66.1	12.1	4.0	83.8	27.8	31.3	40.9	8.9	12.9	78.2	7.2	16.7	76.1
The school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus (Q46)	23.8	9.0	67.2	12.1	3.0	84.8	24.3	28.7	47.0	8.1	14.5	77.4	6.5	21.0	72.5
The presence of some Religious (Sisters, Brothers or Priests) on the staff (Q47)	38.0	21.5	40.5	60.6	11.1	28.3	62.3	26.3	11.4	35.2	23.8	41.0	25.4	16.7	58.0
My child (ren) will come to appreciate their Catholic faith tradition (Q48)	38.8	14.9	46.3	50.5	1.0	48.5	53.1	20.4	26.5	33.1	14.9	52.1	21.5	17.0	61.5
Previous Experience															
Previous experience of a Catholic school (Q35)	50.8	16.9	32.3	56.1	7.1	36.7	54.0	31.9	14.2	48.8	20.0	31.2	32.1	22.9	45.0

Table 5.13 also shows that parents from all five schools attributed little importance to Catholic (as opposed to general) religious factors. They considered the factors, 'the presence of religious educators' and 'helping learners to appreciate their Catholic faith' to be of little importance.

The low responses to the factors concerning Catholic values suggest that parents did not consider these factors as essential to the Catholic nature of the schools.

5.3.10 Previous experience

From Table 5.14, it is clear that parents did not base their choice of Catholic schools on their previous experiences. None of the parents from any of the schools considered this very important. Although the percentage of respondents who attended Catholic schools was lower than those who did not attend, this factor received an overall low rating. (see Table 2, Appendix D for parents who attended Catholic schools). The low responses to the question conflicts with Carpenter and Western's (in Flynn 1993) claim that the choice of a Catholic school by parents is mediated by their own attendance.

5.3.11 Summary

Analysing the data by schools has revealed the similarities and differences between middle-class and working-class parents in relation to school choice. It has also revealed similarities and differences between race, gender and school. The results show that both middle-class and working-class parents are equally concerned with academic standard and good examination results, and that there is little difference between the middle-class and working-class parents as far as instrumental academic values are concerned when it comes to choosing a school. The results also revealed that both middle-class and working-class parents were equally concerned with all-round development of their children. In addition, both class of parents attached importance to discipline. Furthermore the middle-class and working-class parents are equally concerned with dedication and qualification of teachers. Both class of parents also expect the schools to respect their children irrespective of their ability or appearance. Again, both middle-class and

working-class parents did not consider the pastoral care provided by the school to be very important.

The results also indicate that both middle-class and working-class parents are the same when it comes to school choice for the purpose of future economic benefit. All parents from the five schools considered the factor 'the senior children are prepared well for university or tertiary education' to be very important. . In addition, both the middle-class and working-class parents have little interest in extra curriculum activities of the school. Another similarity identified from the results is that both middle-class and working-class parents attached importance to the factor 'the moral values taught in my home are supported by the school'. In addition, both middle-class and working-class parents did not consider Catholic religious values to be essential to the Catholic nature of the schools, especially, the 'presence of religious educators' and 'helping learners to appreciate their Catholic faith'.

The differences between middle-class and working-class parents were also revealed. Parents from the middle-class schools indicated that the community dimension of the schools was very important. They considered especially, the factors 'the school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others', 'the sense of caring community which children experience there' and 'the values of community and tolerance are taught' to be very important in their choice. The working-class parents on the other hand considered these factors to be less important.

The difference between gender was also revealed when it came to the factor concerning 'curriculum'. The all-girls schools considered the 'curriculum offered by the school' to be less important. This suggest that parents from the all-girls schools were only concerned about how well the schools perform academically and do not bother much about the curriculum offered by the school

The differences between schools were also identified when the data were ranked. The ranked table had the list of ten top items. Table 5.14 below contains the ranked items. The

table shows that Schools 1 and 3 had one item each from the academic values category in the top ten items, while School 2 did not include any item from this category in the top ten. These are middle-class schools. The working-class schools on the other hand appear to have included more academic values in the top ten than the middle-class schools. This result does not contradict the result on p. 90 where it was stated that "there is little difference between middle class and working class parents as far as instrumental academic values are concerned when it comes to choosing a school". It simply shows that for middle class parents other items have greater importance. For example Schools 4 and 5 had three of the same items from the academic value category. For the working-class schools, the combination of these items was a very important aspect of academic values. In addition, the table shows that Schools 1 and 2 also had three items the same from the quality of education category. For these schools too the combination of the items was very important. Then Schools 3 and 5 also had one item, each from the quality of education, while School 4 had two items.

Again Schools 1, 2 and 4 had two items each from the teacher quality category in the top ten items, while School 3 had three; School 5 also had four items. For Schools 3 and 5 the combination of these items from teacher quality was a very important factor influencing their choice. For intrinsic personal-personal/social value, apart from School 1 parents who had two items ranked in the top ten, and School 3 parents who did not include any item from the intrinsic value, the rest of the schools had one each .The items that were important to parents from the intrinsic-personal/social value category were 'safe environment' and 'respect for each learner irrespective of ability and appearance'.

Table 5.14: Ranking by School (categories of very important) (%)

Rank	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5	
	Item	**%**	**Item**	**%**	**Item**	**%**	**Item**	**%**	**Item**	**%**
1	The school has a safe environment (Q32)	92.1	The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	99.0	The sense of caring community which children experience there (Q9)	95.6	Good examination results (Q24)	94.5	The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	87.7
2	The school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance (Q31)	88.2	The small classes of the school (Q38)	99.0	The values of community and tolerance are taught (Q10)	95.5	The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	86.6	Good examination results (Q24)	87.6
3	The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	88.1	The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	99.0	A friendly atmosphere with a racial mix (Q13)	85.3	The high academic standards of the school (Q19)	86.5	The school has a principal who is effective (42)	85.5
4	The standard of teaching in the school compared with other schools (Q39)	87.3	The sense of caring community which children experience there (Q9)	99.0	The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	85.0	The dedication of teachers (Q36)	85.8	The school has a safe environment (Q32)	84.8
5	The school has a principal who is effective (42)	87.0	The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn (41)	98.0	The school strives for all-round individual development of my child (Q18)	84.5	The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	85.0	The high academic standards of the school (Q19)	83.3

Table 5.14: Ranking by School (categories of very important) (%) continued

Rank	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5	
	Item	%	Item	%	Item	%	Item	%	Item	%
6	The school strives for all-round individual development of my child (Q18)	86.6	The values of community and tolerance are taught (Q10)	97.9	The dedication of teachers (Q36)	83.3	The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn (41)	84.9	The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	82.6
7	A friendly atmosphere with a racial mix (Q13)	85.8	The school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others (Q8)	96.9	The school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others (Q8)	79.6	The school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance (Q31)	84.3	The dedication of teachers (Q36)	81.9
8	The small classes of the school (Q38)	85.7	The dedication of teachers (Q36)	96.0	Usually the school has good pupil-teacher relationships (Q43)	79.3	The school strives for all-round individual development of my child (Q18)	82.7	The qualification of teachers (Q37)	81.8
9	The curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of my child (Q25)	85.0	The school has a safe environment (Q32)	95.0	The school has a principal who is effective (Q42)	79.3	The school makes its pupils work hard academically in the school (Q26)	82.0	The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn (41)	79.7
10	The values of community and tolerance are taught (Q10)	84.3	The school strives for all-round individual development of my child (Q18)	95.0	Good examination results (Q24)	78.4	The senior children are prepared well for University or tertiary Education (Q27)	80.3	The school makes its pupils work hard academically in the school (Q26)	79.0

Furthermore, Table 5.14 indicates that the middle-class schools considered the community dimension of the school very important. School 1 had two items from the community dimension category; School 2 had three items, while School 3 had four items. Again for the middle-class parents the combination of the items within the community dimension appear to be very important. None of the working-class schools ranked any of the items within the community dimension category. The ranked table also shows that with exception of School 1 the remaining school ranked 'the moral values taught in my home are supported by the school'. The table also shows that it was only School 4 parents who ranked the factor 'the senior children are prepared well for University and tertiary education'

The ranked results indicate that the items ranked in the table appear to be very important for the parents. This is because the difference between the tenth item and the first of each school is not much. For example for School 1 the difference of the tenth item and the first is 7.8%, which suggests that every item was important. For School 2 the difference is only 4%. School 2 appears to be a very unique school. School 2 scored highly in almost all the items. Schools 3 and 4 had a slightly wider gap between item ten and the first item. For School 3, the difference is 17.2%. This suggests that the most important items for School 3 were those ranked from item one to six. And indeed the first three items are related to the community dimension which appears to be the very important factor influencing parental choice of School 3. Then for School 4, the difference is 14.2%. This also suggests that like School 3 the most important items for School 4 were those from item one to six. Two of these items were related to academic values; the rest too have impact on academic performance. For School 5 the difference between the tenth item and the first is 8.7%. This also suggests that the items ranked in the top ten were all important.

5.4 MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS

After the 41 fixed choice factors on the questionnaire, parents were asked to list the three most important factors that had had an influence on their choice of school. After post-coding these were grouped around academic category, school organization, value system

and others (school fees, reputation, accessibility/location and security) (see Table 5.15). Table 5.15 lists these factors. 567 (92.6%) of 612 parents responded here.

Table 5.15 shows that for parents of all five schools the 'value system' was the most important factor (33.0%), followed by the 'academic category' (30.2%). Within these, 'religious values' and 'academic values' have equal importance (17.2%). These two factors stand out clearly as the overall most important items. Surprisingly religious values which were rated low in Table 5.2 were considered more important than moral values in this section. In Table 5.2, religious values was rated low as compared to moral values which parents considered a very important item and ranked 5th in Table 5.2 and rated (67.0%) as *"extremely important"*. This suggests that there is no consistency in the responses. For all schools, except School 3, 'religious values' was the most important item (15-20%), followed by 'academic values' (12-19%). For School 3, 'academic values' (24.8%) headed 'religious values' (13.4%). This result is curious given the previous data and suggests that parents were responding to what was in the school, as opposed to what should be. This is confirmed in section 5.5.1.

Surprisingly, School 3 parents indicated that accessibility/location of the school (14.9%) was more important than religious and moral values. This is white and middle-class parents who, according to Woods *et al.*, (1998), will not likely consider accessibility or location when choosing a school; but here they are placing this factor ahead of moral and religious values. The working-class parents whom I thought would consider this did not. Rather School 4, a working-class school considered 'the value system' (35.7%) to be the most important category and within this, 'religious values' stand out as the most important item (19.9%), followed by 'academic values' (15.8). Surprisingly, neither School 4 nor School 5 parents considered the low fees to be a most important factor. Working-class parents supposedly consider school fees and accessibility as important (Woods *et al.*, 1998), but none of them considered any of these. In addition to religious values and academic values, School 5 considered 'discipline' (15.6%) to be important.

The data have revealed that there is not much difference between middle and working-class parents as far as school choice is concerned. Each of the schools indicated that academic values and religious values are the most important factors, except School 3 parents who showed that accessibility/location was more important than religious values.

Table 5.15: Most important factors (n = 567 Parents)

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (n=116)			School 2 (n= 96)			School 3 (n= 114)			School 4 (n= 114)			School 5 (n=126			All Schools (n=567)		
	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%
Academic																		
Academic	47	13.5		37	12.8		85	24.8		54	15.8		70	18.5		293	17.2	
Curriculum	34	9.7		7	2.4		12	3.5		8	2.3		7	1.8		68	4.0	
Extra-curriculum	12	3.4		15	5.2		4	1.2		3	0.9		3	0.8		37	2.2	
Teacher Quality	24	6.9	**33.5**	15	5.2	**25.7**	13	3.8	**33.2**	28	8.2	**27.2**	35	9.2	**30.3**	115	6.8	**30.2**
Organisation																		
Management	12	3.4		13	4.5		11	3.2		29	8.5		24	6.3		89	5.2	
Teacher-pupil relationship	6	1.7		9	3.1		2	0.6		13	3.8		2	0.5		32	1.9	
Grounds	4	1.1		0	0.0		5	1.5		1	0.3		1	0.3		11	0.6	
Resources/ Facilities	38	10.9		19	6.6		16	4.7		2	0.6		7	1.8		82	4.8	
Discipline	17	4.9	**22.1**	26	9.0	**23.3**	7	2.0	**12.0**	28	8.2	**21.3**	59	15.6	**24.5**	137	8.1	**20.6**
Value System																		
Moral Values	21	6.0		35	12.2		35	10.2		30	8.8		32	8.4		153	9.0	
Religious Values	54	15.5		50	17.4		46	13.4		68	19.9		75	19.8		293	17.2	
Community Spirit	24	6.9	**28.4**	18	6.3	**35.8**	32	9.3	**32.9**	24	7.0	**35.7**	18	4.7	**33.0**	116	6.8	**33.0**
Others																		
Economic	5	1.4		12	4.2		15	4.4		28	8.2		9	2.4		69	4.1	
Reputation	20	5.7		23	8.0		8	2.3		7	2.0		11	2.9		69	4.1	
Accessibility/ Location	27	7.7		4	1.4		51	14.9		15	4.4		19	5.0		116	6.8	
Security	4	1.1	**16.0**	5	1.7	**15.3**	1	0.3	**21.9**	4	1.2	**15.8**	7	1.8	**12.1**	21	1.2	**16.2**
Total	**349**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**288**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**343**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**342**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**379**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**1701**	**100.0**	**100.0**

5 5 SATISFACTORY AND UNSATISFACTORY ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents were also asked to indicate the most satisfactory and the most unsatisfactory aspects of their schools. The results are detailed below and are organized as before into four basic categories: academic factors; organization; aspects relating to the value system; and others in Table 5.16. 489 (76.4%) of parents responded here.

5.5.1 Satisfactory aspects of the schools

In the previous section, the overall most important factor was the 'value system' and then the 'academic category'. For all schools the 'organisation' was the least satisfactory aspect of the school (25-27%). In this section the parents indicated that they were less satisfied with their most important factor, the 'value system' (29.1%), compared with the 'academic category' which was rated highly (38.0%). Within these, 'teacher quality' (13.9%) and 'academic values' (13.8%) stand out to be the most satisfactory aspects of the schools. Within the value system, the 'moral values' (10.5%) and 'community spirit' (10.4%), which were not considered previously to be the most important factors, have turned out to be more satisfactory than the 'religious values' (8.2%).

Analysing the data by school, School 1 indicated that the 'academic category' (37.0%) was more satisfactory than the 'value system' (29.5%) and the 'organisation' (25.6%). Within the categories, 'teacher quality' (14.6%) stands out to be the most satisfactory factor for School 1, followed by the 'community spirit' (10.4%). School 1 did not consider the 'community spirit' to be most important but here it was considered more satisfactory than the 'religious values' (9.7%) which was considered one of the most important factors for School 1 in the previous section.

School 2, like School 1 also considered the 'academic category' (36.9%) to be the most satisfactory aspect of the school, followed by the 'value system' (32.4%). Within these categories 16.2% of parents said they were more satisfied with 'academic values' than 'teacher quality' (13.3%) and 'community spirit' (10.4%).

For School 3, the 'academic category' (47.1%) was the most satisfactory aspect of the school. This was the highest scored item in the table. They indicated that the 'value system' (22.9%) was not satisfied. They even indicated that the organisation (24.8%), which was seen as the least most important aspect, was more satisfactory than the value system.

However, within the categories the factors that stands out are 'academic standard' and 'teacher quality', which were attributed equal importance (13.4%), followed by the 'curriculum' (12.4%). The 'community spirit' (11.4%) was the least satisfactory item for School 3.

For school 4, the 'value system' (33.4%) was more satisfactory than the rest of the schools. Within the categories, the 'moral values' (14.3%) stands out to be the most satisfactory factor. They also considered the 'teacher quality, 'community spirit', academic standard' and 'discipline' to be satisfactory. Unfortunately only 6.5% considered the religious values to be satisfactory. This factor was considered the most important factor for School 4.

School 5, like Schools 1, 2 and 3 indicated that the 'academic category' (38.7%) was the most satisfactory aspect of the school. Within the categories, the 'academic standard' (19%) stands out. This has confirmed their reason for choosing the school. In the previous section, School 5 indicated that the academic standard was the most important and their high response to this factor has shown their satisfaction. This is related to their satisfaction with 'teacher quality,' (14.2%). The 'management' (10.9%) and 'religious values' (10.94%) are satisfactory but not as much as the two factors within the academic category.

This section indicates that parents were not satisfied with the 'academic category' and less satisfied with the 'value system' and the 'organisation.' This section, like the previous one, also showed not much difference between the middle and working class schools; nor were there racial and gender differences. All the schools but School 1

indicated that they were satisfied with 'academic standard' and 'teacher quality' within the academic category. School 1 was only satisfied with the 'teacher quality'. None of the schools in addition indicated any satisfaction with any of the other factors such as 'school fees', 'reputation', 'accessibility/location', and 'security'. The only visible difference was that the two working-class schools considered items such as 'discipline' and 'management' respectively from the organisation category to be satisfactory, but none of the middle-class schools indicated as such. This might suggest that parents from the working-class schools have had experience of a lack of discipline and good management within their local schools and therefore the parents felt satisfied with what takes place in Catholic schools in their location.

Table 5.16: Satisfactory aspects of the School

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (N= 103)			School 2 (N=80)			School 3 (N= 102)			School 4 (N=103)			School 5 (N= 110)			All Schools (N=498)		
	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%
Academic																		
Academic	25	8.1		39	16.2		41	13.4		38	12.3		63	19.0		206	13.8	
Curriculum	24	7.8		7	2.9		38	12.4		8	2.6		7	2.1		84	5.6	
Extra-curriculum	20	6.5		11	4.6		24	7.8		3	1.0		11	3.3		69	4.6	
Teacher Quality	45	14.6	**37.0**	32	13.3	**36.9**	41	13.4	**47.1**	43	14.0	**29.9**	47	14.2	**38.7**	208	13.9	**38.0**
Organisation																		
Management	17	5.5		21	8.7		16	5.2		30	9.7		36	10.9		120	8.0	
Teacher-pupil relationship	21	6.8		14	5.8		9	2.9		18	5.8		11	3.3		73	4.9	
Grounds	7	2.3		0	0.0		15	4.9		0	0.0		1	0.3		23	1.5	
Resources/Facilities	19	6.2		15	6.2		8	2.6		9	2.9		9	2.7		60	4.0	
Discipline	15	4.9	**25.6**	16	6.6	**27.4**	28	9.2	**24.8**	32	10.4	**28.9**	31	9.4	**26.6**	122	8.2	**26.6**
Value System																		
Moral Values	29	9.4		33	13.7		19	6.2		44	14.3		32	9.7		157	10.5	
Religious Values	30	9.7		20	8.3		16	5.2		20	6.5		36	10.9		122	8.2	
Community Spirit	32	10.4	**29.5**	25	10.4	**32.4**	35	11.4	**22.9**	39	12.7	**33.4**	25	7.6	**28.1**	156	10.4	**29.1**
Others																		
Economic	2	0.6		1	0.4		3	1.0		14	4.5		4	1.2		24	1.6	
Reputation	4	1.3		1	0.4		3	1.0		1	0.3		1	0.3		10	0.7	
Accessibility/Location	6	1.9		1	0.4		10	3.3		4	1.3		4	1.2		25	1.7	
Security	12	3.9	**7.8**	5	2.1	**3.3**	0	0.0	**5.2**	5	1.6	**7.8**	13	3.9	**6.6**	35	2.3	**6.3**
Total	**308**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**241**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**306**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**308**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**331**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**1494**	**100.0**	**100.0**

5.5.2 Unsatisfactory aspects of the schools

Parents were asked to indicate the unsatisfactory aspects of the schools and 262 (42.8%) of parents responded here. This should be contrasted with the 498 parents (76.4%) who responded on satisfactory aspects. Table 5.17 lists unsatisfactory aspects. Again, these are organised into four categories 'academic', 'organisation', 'value system' and others. The overall response was that 42.6% of the parents considered the 'organisation' of the school to be the most unsatisfactory aspect. They also indicated that the 'academic category' 32% was not also satisfactory. They showed very little dissatisfaction with the 'value system' (8.9%). The outstanding factor parents considered unsatisfactory within the categories was the 'management' (21.1%) of the school. They also indicated that the 'extra-curriculum activities' (12.5%) and 'discipline' (11.8%) were also unsatisfactory.

The most consistent source of dissatisfaction across the schools was the "management" factors. Beyond this though, the varied responses reflected the particular context and cultures of the different schools.

For all schools except School 3, the 'organisation' was the most unsatisfactory aspect of the schools (36-57%). School 1 showed that within the categories, 'management' (29.3%) stands outs clearly as the most unsatisfactory factor. The parents from School 1 also indicated that the 'school fees' (17.4%) and the 'discipline' (15.6%) of the school were unsatisfactory. School 1 parents showed their dissatisfaction with the school fees through the comments they made. For example, some parents said that "excessive school fees, is driving many parents to seek a cheaper alternative". Another parent also commented that the school "is going mute of becoming an elitist school only catering for the wealthy". A single mother also has this to say: "My boys are very happy in the school, but the school fees are too expensive, and I am a single parents and I do not think there should be more of a discount of school fees for a second child." In addition, another parent commented passionately that: "The school should try to be flexible concerning school fees, not everyone can afford the same, but parents still want the same level of education and academic excellence so their children can have the same opportunities, as parents who can afford private schools." The comments suggested that parents from School 1 were happy with the quality of education provided but not about the high school fees.

Within the categories, for School 2 the 'resources/facilities' (25%) stand out to be the most unsatisfactory factor in the school. This school was moved to a new site about two years ago; therefore it is likely that the all the needed facilities are not in place yet. Parents complain of the lack of a playground. In addition to the resources/facilities, parents from School 2 indicated that the 'management' (22.2%) and the 'religious values' (15.3%) were unsatisfactory. The religious values were the most important factor for School 2, and the response showed that some parents were not happy with the delivery.

For School 3, the 'academic category' (56.6%) appears to be the most unsatisfactory aspect of the school. They also considered the 'organisation' (36.6%) to be unsatisfactory. Within the category, it was clear that 'management' (26.7%) was the most unsatisfactory factor. In addition, parents indicated that they were not satisfied with the 'curriculum' (21.8%) and 'teacher quality' (21.3%).

For School 4, the 'organisation' (37.3%) appears to be the most unsatisfactory aspect of the school. Within the categories, the parents indicated that the 'discipline' (21.7%) was the most unsatisfactory factor. In addition, they indicated that the 'security', 'extra-curriculum' and the 'management' were not satisfactory. Parents commented about the security: "Students are always robbed outside the school environment." Some of the respondents appealed to the school authorities to "relocate the school to safety" because "the area in which the school is located is very risky for the kids." Several parents also commented on the same issue that, "the environment is dangerous. There is a need for police assistance." School 4 is an all black school located in the midst of gangster territory; therefore parents have many reasons to complain and to call for security.

School 5, like the other schools except School 3, indicated that the 'organisation' (38.0%) was the most unsatisfactory aspect of the school. Within the categories, they showed that the 'school fees' (20.9%) was the next most unsatisfactory factor. In addition, they indicated

Table 5.17: Unsatisfactory aspects of the School

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (N= 56)			School 2 (N= 24)			School 3 (N=67)			School 4 (N=72)			School 5 (N= 43)			All Schools (N= 262)		
	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%	No.	%	∑%
Academic																		
Academic	6	3.6		0	0.0		0	0.0		13	6.0		2	1.6		21	2.7	
Curriculum	7	4.2		1	1.4		44	21.8		7	3.2		9	7.0		68	8.6	
Extra-curriculum	12	7.2		14	19.4		21	10.4		38	17.5		13	10.1		98	12.5	
Teacher Quality	5	3.0	**18.0**	1	1.4	**22.2**	43	21.3	**53.5**	4	1.8	**28.6**	12	9.3	**27.9**	65	8.3	**32.0**
Organisation																		
Management	49	29.3		16	22.2		54	26.7		23	10.6		24	18.6		166	21.1	
Teacher-pupil relationship	6	3.6		2	2.8		1	0.5		6	2.8		1	0.8		16	2.0	
Grounds	1	0.6		0	0.0		0	0.0		4	1.8		1	0.8		6	0.8	
Resources/Facilities	12	7.2		18	25.0		17	8.4		1	0.5		6	4.7		54	6.9	
Discipline	26	15.6	**56.3**	1	1.4	**51.4**	2	1.0	**36.6**	47	21.7	**37.3**	17	13.2	**38.0**	93	11.8	**42.6**
Value System																		
Moral Values	4	2.4		1	1.4		0	0.0		19	8.8		12	9.3		36	4.6	
Religious Values	6	3.6		11	15.3		5	2.5		2	0.9		2	1.6		26	3.3	
Community Spirit	2	1.2	**7.2**	2	2.8	**19.4**	1	0.5	**3.0**	2	0.9	**10.6**	1	0.8	**11.6**	8	1.0	**8.9**
Others																		
Economic	29	17.4		5	6.9		1	0.5		0	0.0		27	20.9		62	7.9	
Reputation	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		6	2.8		0	0.0		6	0.8	
Accessibility/Location	0	0.0		0	0.0		11	5.4		3	1.4		2	1.6		16	2.0	
Security	2	1.2	**18.6**	0	0.0	**6.9**	2	1.0	**6.9**	42	19.4	**23.5**	0	0.0	**22.5**	46	5.8	**16.5**
Total	**167**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**72**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**202**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**217**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**129**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**787**	**100.0**	**100.0**

that the 'management,' 'discipline' and 'extra-curriculum' were satisfactory. While the actual number of parents who indicated dissatisfaction might be relatively low compared with the number who expressed satisfaction, this data gives a clear signal about areas that might need attention.

5.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Parents were asked in the questionnaire to indicate how important they rated factors from a list of forty-one possible reasons. The results were presented in two tables, Table 5.1 (Results by choice theories and factors) and Table 5.2 (Rank ordering of results) When we look at the results in Table 5.1, the key findings are that parents tended to base their choice of Catholic schools on high academic standard; good examination results; hard work (academically); all-round individual development of their children; standard of discipline and teacher quality which include dedication and qualification of teachers and classroom ethos. They also attached importance to community dimension of the schools such as, a sense of caring community, values of community and tolerance and encouraging learners to be concerned for the needs of others. In addition, moral values, respect for learners and safe environment are very crucial to parents.

The results also revealed that parents attached less importance to the social standing of the schools, extra curriculum activities and surprisingly to religious values particularly the Catholic religious values. From the analysis, it is clear that parental choice is complex, but the theory that was very strong here was the theory of the instrumental-academic value. In general the above factors are what parents in Western Cape expect from Catholic schools.

The rank ordering of results provides a picture of what the motivating factors really are of parental choice of Catholic schools. The ranking was done in groups of items which produced recognizable priorities (see Table 5.2). The rank results revealed that parents based their choice of Catholic schools on a combination of factors. Here again they demonstrated strong preference for academic values. They value the factors such as disciplinary climate, good examination results and dedication of teachers. In addition, parents showed that the extent to which the school embraced values

contributed to their choice of Catholic schools. These values are related to individual and communal respect.

Parents indicated that though all these factors were very important, the moral values taught at home and which are supported by the school was the most important factor influencing parental choice (see Table 4, Appendix E). In addition, parents based their choice of Catholic schools on school organization in relation to smaller class sizes which give individual attention and better teaching which prepares students for further studies. Again, an effective principal is what parents are looking for in a school. Surprisingly though parents indicated that the religious aspect of the school was important, the values discussed above had greater influence on their choice of Catholic schools more than did the religious aspect of the schools. Other factors which had little influence on parents were the extra curriculum activities, social factors as well as Catholic religious factors.

The results were also analysed by school because of the different character of the schools. The main categories of comparison used here were class, race and gender. Analysing the data by schools revealed similarities and differences between middle-class and working-class parents in relation to school choice. The analysis showed that both middle-class and working-class parents are equally concerned with academic standard and good examination results, and that there is little difference between them as far as instrumental-academic values are concerned when it comes to choosing a school. In addition, both middle-class and working-class parents value disciplinary climate in schools, they are equally concerned with dedication and qualification of teachers.

Further more both class of parents are the same when it comes to school choice for the purpose of future economic benefit. Again, the results revealed that both class of parents considered the moral values very important, and they all attached less importance to Catholic religious factors. The differences that emerged from the analysis were that the middle-class parents were more concerned about the community dimension of the school than were the working-class parents, while the working-class tended to focus mainly on academic values. The differences between genders were also revealed, and it was about the curriculum issue. The all-girls

schools considered the curriculum offered by the school to be less important than other factors.

It is natural that every parent would choose a school that performs well academically, but some parents may have their most important reasons for choosing a particular school. For this reason, the parents were asked to list the three most important factors that had had an influence on their choice of school. The most important factors for the parents were grouped into four basic categories in Table 5.15. Parents indicated that their most important factor was the value system, followed by academic category. Within these categories, academic standards and religious values stand out as the most important items. The two were give equal importance (17.2%).Surprisingly in the previous analysis, religious value was less important, but here it was the most important factor. The school organization was considered lees important. In addition, parents were asked to indicate the most satisfactory and the most unsatisfactory aspects of their schools.

For the satisfactory aspect, parents indicated that the academic category was more satisfactory than the value system, organization and others (school fees, reputation, accessibility and security). Within these categories parents showed their satisfaction with academic standards and work teacher quality. For the unsatisfactory aspects, all five schools demonstrated strongly that the organization of the school was not satisfactory (42.6%), and within this that the management was the most unsatisfactory item in the schools followed by discipline. Another unsatisfactory aspect indicated by parents were the academic category, particularly the extra curriculum activities. These results have policy implications for the Catholic education policy-makers as well as the individual schools.

CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to identify and understand what contributed to parents' choice of Catholic schools in the Western Cape. The following questions served as a guideline to this study: what influences parents' decisions to choose Catholic schools for their children?; what do Catholic school parents expect schools to provide?; what are the characteristics of parents making school choice?; and what conclusions and implications can be drawn from the research?. In order to answer these questions, questionnaires were distributed to parents in five Catholic secondary schools in Cape Town to find out the reasons influencing their decisions to have their children educated in Catholic schools. The parents' responses to the questionnaire provide useful and practical feedback which the Catholic education policy-makers as well as the individual sampled schools can act upon.

The study was conducted around six choice theories and five factors to explain the motives of choice. The six theories were: rational choice; economic theory of choice; social capital theory; class choosing theory; intrinsic-personal/social value perspective theory and instrumental-academic value perspective theory. Of the six theories, the instrumental-academic value perspective theory stands out strongly in the analysis. Parents in this study have demonstrated strong preference for a sound educational structure and a good examination record which the theory of instrumental-academic values emphasises. The five factors were quality of education; teacher quality; community dimension; religious nature of the schools and previous experience of Catholic schools. Of these factors, religious nature of the schools and previous experience of Catholic schools received low scores. Even though religious values were considered a most important factor for parents of all five schools, parents did not choose the schools on the basis of religious values. The parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the religious values of the schools as well as the organisation of the schools by low scores attributed to them.

The findings of the study show that parental choice is indeed complex. Parents tended to look for what Gewirtz *et al.*, refer to as 'the whole package' (995:29) and not just one or two factors. However the parents were particularly influenced by academic

values such as high academic standards; good examination results; disciplinary climate; and teacher quality. In addition, the parents were concerned with values such as individual and communal respect as well as moral values.

The analysis also revealed that there are no class or gender differences as far as academic values were concerned. The results revealed that a concern for academic values is not associated with middle-class parents only but working class parents as well. Both middle-class and working-class parents are equally concerned with high academic standards and good examination results.

These findings have policy implications and provide a feedback for Catholic education policy makers as well as individual schools to act upon. If Catholic schools want to remain relevant, attract more parents and also retain those they already have then they must know themselves, have a clear picture of how parents make their decisions and what they look for in a school. The findings of this study should be seen as a guideline. The schools' management team should examine the unsatisfactory aspects of the schools pointed out by parents in this study and act upon these. This will enable them to be more effective in meeting parents' needs.

The results of this study indicate that further research into similar schools will be interesting and also have a practical significance. In addition to parental choice the future researchers should explore teachers and students' choice of Catholic schools to compare whether teachers and students hold the same opinions as parents.

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Appendix A

1: Sample of letter to parents

Marist Brothers Community,
P.O. Box 775,
Rondebosch 7701,
Cape Town.
Tel. (021) 689 5368

November 16, 2004.

Dear Parent or Guardian,

FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENTS' CHOICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN CAPE TOWN

I am a Marist Brother and a post graduate research student at the University of Cape Town. I am conducting a study on why parents choose Catholic schools for their children. The study is part of the requirement for a dissertation for a Masters' degree.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to know what influenced your decision to have your son or daughter educated in a Catholic school. My findings will serve as a feedback for Catholic educational planners to act upon.

The replies which you make are confidential. No attempt will be made at any stage to identify individual people. Only the researcher will see your responses. Please do not sign your name anywhere.

I value the reasons for your decisions on the questions which follow and trust that you will spare the short time required to answer the Questionnaire over the next few days and return it by your son or daughter to the principal of the school, sealed in the envelope provided, please. I will be grateful if you could return it by November 26, 2004.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

Thank you in anticipation for your co-operation! Good wishes and God bless you in your work as parents today.

Yours sincerely,

Br. John Kusi-Mensah.

2. Sample of questionnaire to parents

FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENTS' CHOICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN WESTERN CAPE, SOUTHE AFRICA.

QUESTIONNAIRE NUMBER ☐

SCHOOL NAME _____ ☐

DIRECTIONS

1. The questionnaire consists of two sections:

   SECTION 1: Background

   SECTION 2: Parents' choice of Catholic schools

2. Please **circle** the appropriate answers in section 1, and **mark** the appropriate boxes in section 2

For official use

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND

1. Please indicate whether you are:

1. Mother
2. Father ☐
3. Guardian
4. Friend
5. Other person (Specify)

2. In which of the following groups does your age fall?

1. 21 – 30 years
2. 31 – 40 years
3. 41 – 50 years ☐
4. 51+ years

3.Please indicate your occupation

.....

4.What is your religion?

1. Catholic ☐
2. Greek Orthodox
3. Other Christian faith
4. Non- Christian faith
5. None

For official use

5. How important would you say religion is in your life?

1. Not important at all
2. Not very important
3. Of some importance
4. Fairly importance
5. Very important

6. How long has your child (ren) attended Catholic schools?

1. Child 1. ..... years
2. Child 2. ..... years
3. Child 3. ..... years

7. Did you or your spouse attend a Catholic school?

1. Yourself .....Yes No
2. Spouse/Partner ..... Yes No

SECTION 2 – PARENTS'CHOICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

This section is concerned with why you chose a Catholic School for your child or children. Please indicate how important were the following reasons in your decision to have your son or daughter educated in a Catholic school?

Please write in boxes – using the 5 point scale:

1 = NOT IMPORTANT **2** = SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT **3** = IMPORTANT

4 = VERY IMPORTANT **5** = EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

Importance in the choice of a Catholic school

8. The school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others .....

9. The sense of caring community which children experience there .....

10. The values of community and tolerance are taught .....

11. The social relationships and experiences provided by the school .....

12. The pastoral care provided by the school .....

13.	A friendly atmosphere with a racial mix	
14.	The social standing, or prestige, of the school	
15.	The reputation of the school	
16.	The children who went there are the kind of children I want my child (ren) to mix with	
17.	An international mix of students	
18.	The school strives for all- round individual development of my child	
19.	The high academic standards of the school	
20.	The impressive/wide range of extracurricular facilities	
21.	The cultural life of the school	
22.	The sporting life of the school	
23.	The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school	
24.	Good examination results	
25.	The curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of my child	
26.	The school makes its pupils work hard academically in the school	
27.	The senior children are prepared well for University or tertiary Education	
28.	Many will be able to get a job on leaving school	
29.	Reasonable school fees	
30.	The school was conveniently accessible	
31.	The school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance	
32.	The school has a safe environment	
33.	The school's attitude to parents is impressive	
34.	My child (ren)'s friends attended	
35.	Previous experience of a Catholic school	
36.	The dedication of teachers	
37.	The qualification of teachers	
38.	The small classes of the school	
39.	The standard of teaching in the school compared with other schools	
40.	The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school	
41.	The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn	
42.	The school has a principal who is effective	
43.	Usually the school has good pupil-teacher relationships	
44.	The religious education programme offered by the school	

45. The way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God ..... ☐

46. The school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus ..... ☐

47. The presence of some Religious (Sisters, Brothers or Priests) on the staff ..... ☐

48. My child (ren) will come to appreciate their Catholic faith tradition ..... ☐

For official use

49. What are the THREE MOST IMPORTANT factors in choosing this school?

1. ..... ☐
2. ..... ☐
3. ..... ☐

50. What are the satisfactory aspects of the school?

1. ..... ☐
2. ..... ☐
3. ..... ☐

51. What are the unsatisfactory aspects of the school?

1. ..... ☐
2. ..... ☐
3. ..... ☐

52. ANY OTHER COMMENTS

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

Appendix B

School Data

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide information about student and staff population, religious affiliation and Matric results.

Please kindly fill in the information in the tables below

Student and Staff population

Students		Staff	
Junior	High	Junior	High

Religious affiliation

	Students		Teaching Staff	
	No.	%	No.	%
Catholic				
Other Christian faith				
Islamic/Muslim				
Hindu				
Buddhist				
Judaism				
Agnostic				
Greek Orthodox				
Dutch reform church				
Unknown				
TOTAL				

Matric results from 2001 to 2004

Year	No. of candidates	Pass	Pass with merit	Pass with distinction	Matriculation exemption	% passed with exemption
2001						
2002						
2003						
2004						

Appendix C

Sample of Interviews with principals

This interview is to find out about the size of the school, the character and culture of the school, the fee structure, and teachers and their religious affiliation.

I know you are very busy therefore this interview will be brief.

1. I would like to begin this interview with a question about the size of the school.
    a. What is the student population of the school?
    b. What about the staff population?

2. Catholics believe in the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. As a Catholic school how often do you have Eucharistic celebration (Mass)?
    a. Do you also have morning prayers everyday?
    b. Apart from the Mass and daily morning prayers, what other religious exercises do you engage in? (for example, retreat, religious education, preparing students for the sacraments).
    c. Do you have any symbolic images in the classrooms? (for example, crucifix and statues)
    d. I am aware that Catholic schools admit non-Catholics. But do the non-Catholic students take part in the Catholic religious exercises?

3. Is the school a racial mix?

4. What extra-curriculum activities do you have in the school?

5. What are the yearly fees?

6. Are all your teachers Catholics?

7. How do the non-Catholic teachers manage to maintain the Catholic ethos of the school?

8. When you are interviewing two people, a Catholic and non-Catholic for a teaching post, who among the two will you employ?

9. How old is the school?

Thank you very much for the time and the information. The information I have received through this interview will enrich the research greatly. Once again thank you and may God bless you.

Appendix D

Table 1: Learner Grades

FACTOR / ITEM	School 1 (N= 123)		School 2 (N= 100)		School 3 (N= 114)		School 4 (N= 128)		School 5 (N= 140)		All Schools (N= 605)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Grade 8	29	23.6	38	38.0	42	36.8	37	28.9	34	24.3	191	31.6
Grade 9	30	24.4	36	36.0	20	17.5	37	28.9	39	27.9	177	29.3
Grade 10	37	30.1	26	26.0	31	27.2	25	19.5	35	25.0	128	21.2
Grade 11	27	22.0	0	0.0	21	18.4	29	22.7	32	22.9	109	18.0
	123	**100.0**	**100**	**100.0**	**114**	**100.0**	**128**	**100.0**	**140**	**100.0**	**605**	**100.0**

Table 2: Previous Experience of Catholic schools

FACTOR / ITEM		School 1 (N= 126)		School 2 (N= 97)		School 3 (N= 115)		School 4 (N= 124)		School 5 (N= 127)		All Schools (N= 589)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Respondent													
	YES	48	38.1	46	47.4	28	24.3	25	20.2	53	42.1	200	34.0
	NO	78	61.9	51	52.6	87	75.7	99	79.8	73	57.9	388	66.0
		126	**100**	**97**	**100**	**115**	**100**	**124**	**100**	**126**	**100**	**588**	**100**
Spouse / Partner	**YES**	24	22.4	16	16.8	53	46.1	9	9.1	27	25.0	129	24.6
	NO	83	77.6	79	83.2	62	53.9	90	90.9	81	75.0	395	75.4
		107	**100**	**95**	**100**	**115**	**100**	**99**	**100**	**108**	**100**	**524**	**100**

Appendix E

Table 3: Full results by choice, theories and factors

FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools				
	Not Important	Important	Important	Very Important	Important
	%	%	%	%	%
Instrumental Academic Value					
The high academic standards of the school (Q19)	1.6	2.0	12.7	28.7	55.0
Good examination results (Q24)	1.3	1.3	11.2	28.2	58.0
The curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of my child (Q25)	1.7	1.8	19.2	31.2	46.1
The school makes its pupils work hard academically in the school (Q26)	1.2	1.5	16.6	34.8	46.0
Quality of Education					
The school strives for all- round individual development of my child (Q18)	1.1	1.6	12.8	30.7	53.7
The impressive wide range of extracurricular facilities (Q20)	1.8	7.9	33.2	29.9	27.2
The cultural life of the school (Q21)	2.8	8.4	32.4	35.7	20.7
The sporting life of the school (Q22)	6.1	8.9	37.7	30.4	16.9
The small classes of the school (Q38)	1.8	4.0	14.9	30.2	49.1
The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	1.2	0.8	11.2	30.1	56.7
Teacher Quality					
The dedication of teachers (Q36)	1.7	1.7	10.9	31.7	54.0
The qualification of teachers (Q37)	1.3	2.1	14.0	34.5	47.9
The standard of teaching in the school compared with other schools (Q39)	3.0	4.8	16.0	29.3	47.0
The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn (Q 41)	1.7	1.5	13.6	26.7	56.6
The school has a principal who is effective (Q 42)	1.8	2.6	17.5	23.2	54.9
Usually the school has good pupil-teacher relationships (Q 43)	1.3	2.6	19.9	35.4	40.7
Social/Intrinsic Personal Value					
The school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance (Q31)	2.0	1.6	12.5	26.2	57.7
The school has a safe environment (Q32)	3.4	2.8	11.7	21.7	60.4

Table 3: Full results by choice, theories and factors continued

FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools				
	Not Important	Important	Important	Very Important	Important
	%	%	%	%	%
The school's attitude to parents is impressive(Q33)	12.7	10.8	22.4	28.5	25.7
My child (ren)'s friends attended (Q34)	30.0	23.5	18.6	19.3	8.7
Community Dimension					
The school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others (Q8)	0.5	2.0	19.2	35.7	42.5
The sense of caring community which children experience there (Q9)	0.8	3.2	15.9	43.6	36.5
The values of community and tolerance are taught (Q10)	0.8	1.8	12.0	39.7	45.7
The pastoral care provided by the school (Q12)	5.2	7.0	23.6	36.4	27.8
A friendly atmosphere with a racial mix (Q13)	3.7	7.3	16.5	36.1	36.4
Social Capital					
The social relationships and experiences provided by the school (Q11)	0.5	3.5	24.2	37.6	34.2
The social standing, or prestige, of the school (Q14)	13.9	11.1	27.9	24.1	23.0
The children who went there are the kind of children I want my child (ren) to mix with (Q16)	19.1	7.9	22.6	27.6	22.9
Social Class					
The reputation of the school (Q15)	5.3	4.4	20.6	32.1	37.7
An international mix of students (Q17)	11.7	13.4	24.0	27.1	23.8
Reasonable school fees (Q29)	12.3	12.5	23.1	23.1	29.1
The school was conveniently accessible (Q30)	13.4	7.1	22.1	29.9	27.4
Economic Factor					
The senior children are prepared well for University or tertiary Education (Q27)	2.2	2.2	17.1	32.4	46.1
Many will be able to get a job on leaving school (Q28)	11.5	12.0	23.5	24.5	28.5
Religious Nature					
The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	1.5	3.1	10.7	17.7	67.0
The religious education programme offered by the school (Q44)	7.3	9.8	18.2	28.4	36.3
The way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God (Q45)	7.5	8.0	15.6	29.2	39.8

Table 3: Full results by choice, theories and factors continued

FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools				
	Not Important	Important	Important	Very Important	Important
	%	%	%	%	%
The school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus (Q46)	9.4	5.4	15.7	30.3	39.3
The presence of some Religious (Sisters, Brothers or Priests) on the staff (Q47)	33.5	9.4	20.0	18.4	18.7
My child (ren) will come to appreciate their Catholic faith tradition (Q48)	29.1	9.2	14.1	19.9	27.6
Previous Experience					
Previous experience of a Catholic school (Q35)	41.3	6.4	20.1	15.4	16.8

Table 4: Full rank results

Rank	FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools				
		Not Important	Slightly Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
		%	%	%	%	%
	Academic standard					
1	The standard of discipline and behaviour maintained in the school (Q40)	1.2	0.8	11.2	30.1	56.7
2	Good examination results (Q24)	1.3	1.3	11.2	28.2	58.0
3	The dedication of teachers (Q36)	1.7	1.7	10.9	31.7	54.0
4	The high academic standards of the school (Q19)	1.6	2.0	12.7	28.7	55.0
	Values: individual and communal respect					
5	The values of community and tolerance are taught (Q10)	0.8	1.8	12.0	39.7	45.7
6	The moral values taught in my home are supported by the school (Q23)	1.5	3.1	10.7	17.7	67.0
7	The school strives for all- round individual development of my child (Q18)	1.1	1.6	12.8	30.7	53.7
8	The school respects each learner irrespective of ability or appearance (Q31)	2.0	1.6	12.5	26.2	57.7

Table 4: Full rank results continued

Rank	FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools				
		Not Important	Slightly Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
		%	%	%	%	%
	School quality					
9	The classroom work ethos which enables all students to learn (41)	1.7	1.5	13.6	26.7	56.6
10	The qualification of teachers (Q37)	1.3	2.1	14.0	34.5	47.9
11	The school has a safe environment (Q32)	3.4	2.8	11.7	21.7	60.4
12	The school makes its pupils work hard academically in the school (Q26)	1.2	1.5	16.6	34.8	46.0
13	The sense of caring community which children experience there (Q9)	0.8	3.2	15.9	43.6	36.5
	School organisation					
14	The small classes of the school (Q38)	1.8	4.0	14.9	30.2	49.1
15	The senior children are prepared well for University or tertiary Education (Q27)	2.2	2.2	17.1	32.4	46.1
16	The school has a principal who is effective (42)	1.8	2.6	17.5	23.2	54.9
16	The school encourages learners to be concerned for the needs of others(Q8)	0.5	2.0	19.2	35.7	42.5
18	The curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of my child (Q25)	1.7	1.8	19.2	31.2	46.1
19	The standard of teaching in the school compared with other schools (Q39)	3.0	4.8	16.0	29.3	47.0
20	Usually the school has good pupil-teacher relationships (Q43)	1.3	2.6	19.9	35.4	40.7
21	A friendly atmosphere with a racial mix (Q13)	3.7	7.3	16.5	36.1	36.4
22	The social relationships and experiences provided by the school (Q11)	0.5	3.5	24.2	37.6	34.2
	Religious factors					
23	The reputation of the school (Q15)	1.5	3.1	10.7	17.7	67.0
24	The school assists learners to know and base their lives on Jesus (Q46)	9.4	5.4	15.7	30.3	39.3
25	The way in which the school tries to assist learners to grow in faith in God (Q45)	7.5	8.0	15.6	29.2	39.8
26	The religious education programme offered by the School (Q44)	7.3	9.8	18.2	28.4	36.3
27	The pastoral care provided by the school (Q12)	5.2	7.0	23.6	36.4	27.8

Table 4: Full rank results continued

Rank	FACTOR / ITEM	All Schools				
		Not Important	Slightly Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
		%	%	%	%	%
	Extra-curriculum activities and social factors					
28	The school was conveniently accessible (Q30)	13.4	7.1	22.1	29.9	27.4
29	The impressive wide range of extracurricular facilities (Q20)	1.8	7.9	33.2	29.9	27.2
30	The cultural life of the school (Q21)	2.8	8.4	32.4	35.7	20.7
31	The school's attitude to parents is impressive(Q33)	12.7	10.8	22.4	28.5	25.7
32	Many will be able to get a job on leaving school (Q28)	11.5	12.0	23.5	24.5	28.5
33	Reasonable school fees (Q29)	12.3	12.5	23.1	23.1	29.1
34	An international mix of students (Q17)	11.7	13.4	24.0	27.1	23.8
35	The children who went there are the kind of children I want my child (ren) to mix with (Q16)	19.1	7.9	22.6	27.6	22.9
	Catholic religious factors, sporting and social class values					
36	My child (ren) will come to appreciate their Catholic faith tradition (Q48)	29.1	9.2	14.1	19.9	27.6
37	The sporting life of the school (Q22)	6.1	8.9	37.7	30.4	16.9
38	The social standing, or prestige, of the school (Q14)	13.9	11.1	27.9	24.1	23.0
39	The presence of some religious (Sisters, Brothers or Priests)on the staff (Q47)	33.5	9.4	20.0	18.4	18.7
40	40. Previous experience of a Catholic school (Q35)	41.3	6.4	20.1	15.4	16.8
41	My child (ren)'s friends attended (Q34)	30.0	23.5	18.6	19.3	8.7

Appendix F

Parental Occupation

The classification of occupations below is adopted from the International Labour Office (1990). The structure of the International Labour Office's occupations classification "consists of ten major groups at the top level of aggregation, subdivided into 28 sub-major groups ..." (p:3). But for the purpose of this dissertation an additional two groups are added (unemployed and house-wife) to the major groups as seen on the list. The purpose for this classification is to establish the type of social class of parents or characteristic of parents who make the choice of Catholic schools in Cape Town. For this reason group two which is professionals is divided into two; professionals and semi-professionals. Though the International Labour Office grouped them together, it has been divided to show income differentiation groups. For example a medical doctor and a nurse are all professionals but a medical doctor receives a higher salary than a nurse. The Catholic schools are fee paying schools; therefore this division of professionals will help to identify the real choosers.

CATEGORIES IF OCCUPATION

1. Legislators, senior officials and managers

- Diplomatic

2. Directors

- Contracts directors
- Company directors

3. Productions and operations department manager

- Production manager
- Operational manager

4. Department managers

- Investment management administrator
- Sales manager
- IT manager
- CIS manager
- Retail manager
- Case manager-RN
- Lubricants sales manger
- Assistant manager
- Manager-Insurance company
- Manager
- Administrator

5. Professionals

- Medical Doctor
- Physiologist
- Pharmacist
- Engineer
- Attorney
- Lawyer
- Accountant
- Chartered Accountant

- Business

6. Semi-Professionals

- Nursing sister
- Nurse
- Teacher
- Training officer
- Journalist
- Musician
- Classical dancer
- Artist
- Educational development officer
- Supervisor
- Charge-hand
- Freelance editor
- Company editor

7. Technicians and associate professionals

- Electrician
- Machinist
- Machine operator

8. Associate professionals

- Clinical nutritionist
- Insurance Broker
- Travel consultant
- Sales representative
- Bank officer
- Archer dealer
- Gains assessor

9. Clerks

- Secretary
- Administrative clerk
- Production clerk
- Bank clerk
- Receptionist and information clerk
- Customer service clerk

10. Service workers and shop and market sales workers

- House-keeper
- Restaurateur
- Hair stylist
- Beautician
- Security

11. Skilled agricultural and fishery workers

12. Craft and related trade workers

- Moulding wrapping
- Dress maker
- Seamstress
- Butcher

13. Plant and machine operators and assemblers

- Machine operator
- Driver

14. Elementary occupations

- Domestic worker
- Cleaner
- Till packer
- Timber packer
- Cater packer

15. Armed forces

16 Unemployed

- Retired
- Pensioner

17. Housewife